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# Pioneers of Empire

PIONEERS IN INDIA



# PIONEERS OF EMPIRE

BY

SIR HARRY JOHNSTON, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.

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GEORGE BOGLE TAKING TEA WITH THE TESHU LAMA IN TIBET (177)

# Pioneers in India

By SIR HARRY JOHNSTON

G.C.M.G., K.C.B.

*WITH EIGHT COLOURED ILLUSTRATIONS*

*BY E. WALLCOUSINS*

PIONEERS OF EMPIRE



BLACKIE AND SON LIMITED

LONDON GLASGOW BOMBAY

1913



## PREFACE

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THE publishers of this book asked me to write a series of works which should deal with "real adventures", in parts of the world either wild and uncontrolled by any civilized government, or at any rate regions full of dangers, of wonderful discoveries; in which the daring and heroism of white men (and sometimes of white women) stood out clearly against backgrounds of unfamiliar landscapes, peopled with strange nations, savage tribes, dangerous beasts, or wonderful birds. These books would again and again illustrate the first coming of the white race into regions inhabited by people of a different type, with brown, black, or yellow skins; how the European was received, and how he treated these races of the soil which gradually came under his rule owing to his superior knowledge, weapons, wealth, or powers of persuasion. The books were to tell the plain truth, even if here and there they showed the white man to have behaved badly, or if they revealed the fact that the American Indian, the Negro, the Malay, the black Australian was sometimes cruel and treacherous.

A request thus framed was almost equivalent

to asking me to write stories of those pioneers who founded the British Empire; in any case, the volumes of this series do relate the adventures of those who created the greater part of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, by their perilous explorations of unknown lands and waters. In many instances the travellers were all unconscious of their destinies, of the results which would arise from their actions. In some cases they would have bitterly railed at Fate had they known that the result of their splendid efforts was to be the enlargement of an empire under the British flag. Perhaps if they could know by now that we are striving under that flag to be just and generous to all types of men, and not to use our empire solely for the benefit of English-speaking men and women, the French who founded the Canadian nation, the Germans and Dutch who helped to create British Africa, Malaysia, and Australia, the Spaniards who preceded us in the West Indies and in New Guinea, and the Portuguese in West, Central, and East Africa, in Newfoundland, Ceylon, and Malaysia, might—if they have any consciousness or care for things in this world—be not so sorry after all that we are reaping where they sowed.

It is (as you will see) impossible to tell the tale of these early days in the British Dominions beyond the Seas, without describing here and there the adventures of men of enterprise and daring who were not of our own nationality. The majority, nevertheless, were of British stock; that is to say, they were English, Welsh, Scots, Irish, perhaps

## Preface

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here and there a Channel Islander and a Manxman; or Nova Scotians, Canadians, and New Englanders. The bulk of them were good fellows, a few were saints, a few were ruffians with redeeming features. Sometimes they were common men who blundered into great discoveries which will for ever preserve their names from perishing; occasionally they were men of Fate, predestined, one might say, to change the history of the world by their revelations of new peoples, new lands, new rivers, new lakes, snow mountains, and gold mines. Here and there is a martyr like Marquette, or Livingstone, or Gordon, dying for the cause of a race not his own. And others again are mere boys, whose adventures come to them because they are adventurous, and whose feats of arms, escapes, perils, and successes are quite as wonderful as those attributed to the juvenile heroes of Marryat, Stevenson, and the author of *The Swiss Family Robinson*.

I have tried, in describing these adventures, to give my readers some idea of the scenery, animals, and vegetation of the new lands through which these pioneers passed on their great and small purposes; as well as of the people, native to the soil, with whom they came in contact. And in treating of these subjects I have thought it best to give the scientific names of the plant or animal which was of importance in my story, so that any of my readers who were really interested in natural history could at once ascertain for themselves the exact type alluded to, and, if they wished, look it up in a museum, a garden, or a natural history book.



## Preface

I hope this attempt to be accurate will not frighten away readers seeking only recreation, who will find in between these zoological or botanical notes a variety of exciting incidents, and many a strange and fascinating glimpse of savage life, plenty of hairbreadth escapes, deeds of heroism or of bloodshed, and triumphs of courage and dogged perseverance. There will be no sentimentality about my stories; at the same time they will contain nothing that a healthy-minded person may not read without repugnance. There are cannibals in *Robinson Crusoe*, and you will meet them—real ones—in these books; scalps are taken and the prisoners are tortured by Fenimore Cooper's Red Indians: well, I will show you the very originals of Fenimore's noble savages, as described by the first Europeans who met them. You shall see what the pirates of the Spanish Main and the seas of Borneo were really like; witness slave-raids in Central Africa, trials for witchcraft, deaths from thirst, and terrible episodes of almost complete starvation. Yet you shall also behold rare acts of kindness from savages towards white men and white men towards savages, attend feastings and frolics as well as deaths and scenes of torture. Your feelings shall not be unnecessarily harrowed, you will learn much of geography and natural history by the way; and, if you can have patience with the author and his desire to instruct you occasionally, you will, by reading this series of books on the great pioneers of British West Africa, Canada, India, Australasia, the West Indies, and South Africa, get a clear idea

of how the British Colonial Empire came to be founded.

You will find that I have often tried to tell the story in the words of the pioneers, but in these quotations I have adopted the modern spelling, not only in my transcript of the English original or translation, but also in the place and tribal names, so as not to puzzle or delay the reader. Otherwise, if you were to look out some of the geographical names of the old writers, you might not be able to recognize them on the modern atlas. The pronunciation of this modern geographical spelling is very simple and clear: the vowels are pronounced *a* = ah, *e* = eh, *i* = ee, *o* = o, *ô* = oh, *ô* = aw, *û* = u in 'hurt', and *u* = oo, as in German, Italian, or most other European languages; and the consonants as in English.

H. H. JOHNSTON.



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# A List of the Principal Works

CONSULTED OR QUOTED FROM IN THE  
COMPILATION OF THIS BOOK, AND IN  
ADDITION TO THE AUTHOR'S OWN PAST  
WRITINGS ON AND TRAVEL EXPERIENCES  
IN INDIA

---

**History of Ancient Geography**, by Sir Thomas Bunbury. 2 Vols.  
John Murray.

**The Dawn of Modern Geography**, by C. Raymond Beazley, M.A.,  
F.R.G.S. Vols. I, II, and III. Clarendon Press, Oxford.

**The Indian Empire: its Peoples, History, and Products.** Third  
Edition. By Sir William Wilson Hunter. W. H. Allen.

**India in the 15th Century**, translated from documents in the Latin,  
Persian, Russian, and Italian languages, and edited by R. H. Major.  
Hakluyt Society.

**The Travels of Ludovico di Varthema**, translated from the original  
Italian edition, and edited by George Percy Badger. Hakluyt Society.

**A Description of the Coasts of East Africa and Malabar in the  
beginning of the 16th Century**, by Duarte Barbosa. Translated from  
the Spanish by the Hon. H. E. J. Stanley. Hakluyt Society.

**The Voyage of Jan Huyghen van Linschoten to the East Indies.**  
2 Vols. Edited by Arthur Coke Burnell and P. A. Tiele. Hakluyt  
Society.

**Ralph Fitch: England's Pioneer to India and Burma**, by J. Horton  
Ryley, 1899. T. Fisher Unwin.

**The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to the Court of the Great Mogul.**  
2 Vols. Edited by William Foster. Hakluyt Society.

**The Voyage of Francois Pyrard de Laval to the East Indies, &c.**  
2 Vols. Translated and Edited by Albert Gray. Hakluyt Society.



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**A Geographical Account of Countries round the Bay of Bengal, 1669-1679**, by Thomas Powrey. Edited by Sir R. E. Temple, Bart. Hakluyt Society.

**François Bernier's Travels in the Mogul Empire, 1656-1668**, revised and improved edition by Archibald Constable, 1891.

Constable's **Oriental Miscellany**.

**Travels in India**, by Jean Baptiste Tavernier. 2 Vols. Translated and Edited by Dr. V. Ball. Macmillan & Co.

**Miscellaneous Essays Relating to Indian Subjects**, by Brian Houghton Hodgson. 2 Vols. Trübner & Co., 1880.

**Essays on the Language, Literature, and Religion of Nepal and Tibet**, by B. H. Hodgson. Trübner & Co., 1874.

**Narratives of the Mission of George Bogle to Tibet, &c.** Edited by Sir Clements R. Markham. Trübner & Co., 1876.

**Pen and Pencil Sketches: being the Journal of a Tour in India**, by Captain Mundy. 2 Vols. John Murray, 1832.

**Travels into Bokhara, &c.** Also **A Narrative of a Voyage on the Indus from the Sea to Lahore, &c.**, by Lieutenant Alexander Burnes. 3 Vols. John Murray, 1834.

**Cabool: a Personal Narrative of a Journey to and Residence in that City in the years 1836-8**, by Sir Alexander Burnes. John Murray, 1843.

**The Rise and Expansion of the British Dominion in India**, by Sir Alfred Lyall. John Murray.

The spelling of all Indian names of places, persons, and products has been uniformly rendered in the spelling now adopted by the India Office and the Indian Government, and by such standard works as *The Indian Empire*, &c., by Sir W. W. Hunter.

# PIONEERS IN INDIA

## CHAPTER I

### The Invaders of India in Ancient Times

The great Peninsula of India was not always connected with the mainland of continental Asia. In that period of the Earth's history which is known as the Secondary Epoch, and even during a good deal of the later Tertiary times, perhaps after Man had come into existence, all Central and Southern India was separated from the great wall and foothills of the Himalayas by a shallow sea, represented at the present day by the basins of the Indus and the Ganges, the Plains of India and the Sunderbunds. All Central and Southern India was probably joined with Ceylon during the Secondary and earlier Tertiary ages, and spread eastwards across the Bay of Bengal to Burma and the Malay Peninsula, which together with all the great Malay Islands and New Guinea was united by a continuous land surface with Australia. Westwards, Central and Southern India stretched across the Indian Ocean to Madagascar and East Africa, while West Africa was united fitfully with Brazil—then, perhaps, separated by a narrow sea from Andine South America. Thus there would seem to have been an immensely long equatorial belt of land across the Globe, extending from Western Brazil to Australia; by way of Africa, the Peninsula of India, and

Malaysia. To this ancient continent has been applied the name "Gondwana" (from a geological formation of Central India). It might also be called the Diamond Continent, for it is remarkable that, so far as present researches go, diamonds are almost confined in their distribution to the remains of this ancient equatorial landbelt, this continent of "Gondwana", being found in Guiana and Brazil, in West Africa, South and East Africa, in Central India, Borneo, and Australia; elsewhere only in North America and (doubtfully) in parts of northern Europe.<sup>1</sup>

During the Tertiary Epoch the tablelands of Central Asia and the great range of the Himalaya Mountains underwent considerable elevation, and with them rose the land now represented by the Plains of India; while the narrow sea, once, perhaps, an eastern extension of the Mediterranean, dried up, its place being taken by the courses of two great rivers, the Indus on the west and the Ganges on the east. It has been surmised that Man himself came into existence somewhere in Southern Asia, either in India or Malaysia, or possibly in the land, now sunk beneath the surface of the Bay of Bengal, which united these regions. In Southern India and Ceylon, in Burma, the Andaman Islands, and Malaysia are found at the present day types of all the main divisions of the human species. In the Vedda of Ceylon and the Australoid race of Australasia we have living examples of the primitive man of Ancient Europe. In Southern India, the Andaman Islands, the Malay Peninsula, and several of the great Malay Islands there are negroes, some of whom

<sup>1</sup> Diamonds, for which India was afterwards to become so famous, were scarcely known to the civilized nations of Europe before the Christian era. The Greek word *adamas*, from which we derived our words "*adamant*" and "*diamond*", is supposed really to have indicated corundum, a mineral from which emeralds, sapphires, and other hard stones are derived.

## The Invaders of India

are scarcely distinguishable in appearance from those of Africa. Elsewhere in these regions there are primitive Mongolians—the yellow type of man—with high, broad cheekbones, narrow nose, slanting eyes, and long, straight hair, of round section. And there is above all, especially in India, but also here and there in Malaysia, a Caucasian type of man related obviously to the peoples of Europe, Western Asia and North Africa, though very often this white man is not white or light-coloured in skin, but quite dark, through his ancestors having mixed with the black people whom they found in previous occupation of the country.

The history of India and Malaysia, in fact, has been rather like the history of Africa: they were once regions of the Earth's surface in the possession of an inferior type of human being, for the most part dark or black-skinned, and with curly hair; and during a period which may be vaguely estimated at about ten thousand years, they have been repeatedly invaded by Caucasian races from the north. The first White or Caucasian invaders may have been the ancestors (on one side) of the Dravidian populations of Southern India and Baluchistan. They came probably from the direction of Afghanistan or Persia and spoke languages distinctly akin to those of the Caucasus Mountains at the present day. Probably they found India populated by negroes and Australoids. They fused with this aboriginal population, giving to it, however, the handsome features and high intelligence of the European. Other branches of the Caucasian race at some remote period descended from the north into Indo-China and the Malay Peninsula, thus reaching not only Sumatra but the far eastern islands around and beyond New Guinea, where they laid the foundations of the Polynesian race.

At some much later period, which Hindu chronologists with exaggeration have placed as remotely as five thousand years ago, but in all probability about two thousand years before the time of Christ (which would be nearly four thousand years ago), the Caucasian was preparing to invade India with great potency and in considerable numbers. And—what is so interesting to us—these great Aryan invaders of Southern Asia were in some way—perhaps very closely—akin to the ancestral tribes of the Gothic, German, Greek, Latin, Keltic, and Slavonic peoples, from various strains of which we British people are likewise descended. And that is the reason why so many of the Indian languages spoken at the present day belong to the same speech family as our own, and as Latin, Greek, German, Welsh, Irish, and Russian. This group of languages is sometimes called the Indo-European, because its range not only covers nearly the whole of Europe, but also much of India, Ceylon, Persia, and perhaps in times gone by, Central Asia. The preferable name for this noble speech family, which has produced the leading languages of civilization, is Aryan. This was the racial name adopted by the new type of Caucasian invaders of India which followed—after a long interval of time—the ancestors of the Dravidians. It meant “the noble people”; and the original name of Northern India in their speech was Arya Varta “the abode of the Aryas”.

Assuming the invasion of India by a fair-skinned people of European type, speaking an Aryan language, to have commenced about four thousand years ago, and thereby to have had a profound effect on the future history and development of Asia, it may be said that it has been continued at intervals ever since, but from widely different directions.

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The first Aryans who crossed over the mountains of Afghanistan and Western Tibet spoke a language something like Sanskrit, the sacred language of India, a language in which most of the laws, traditions, poems, and religious beliefs of these early white men in India have been preserved. But the speech of the first-comers may have been more ancient than Sanskrit and more akin to the original Aryan mother tongue which became ultimately the parent of nearly all the European languages of the present day, besides most of those of Western and Southern Asia. There has been much speculation as to the part of the world in which the Aryan people grew into being. They were obviously white men and women of high physical and mental development, similar in appearance and in cast of thought to the Ancient Greeks, the Latins, the Goths, the Poles, the Western Russians, and the English. At one time it was believed that this remarkable people developed their Aryan language and their characteristics in Central or in North-western Asia, from which direction they invaded and colonized Europe (as far west as Ireland and as far south as Sicily), while another stream of invaders took possession of Northern Persia and Northern India. Then came about a change of opinion. Scientific men, after careful comparison of the various Aryan languages and of other evidence, decided that the original home of the Aryans was somewhere in Western Russia or on the shores of the Black Sea. Others, again, have thought that it might have been in Asia Minor or in Eastern Russia. Recently it has been discovered that a very pure and ancient form of Aryan language was spoken in Turkestan about two thousand years ago, before so much of that region was rendered uninhabitable for a time by drought and the advance of the sand (it was

## Pioneers in India

afterwards repopulated scantily by people of Mongolian race: Tatars and Turks). But the point is one which need not detain us long here. It is practically certain that the Aryan peoples arose either in easternmost Europe or westernmost Asia.

The second invasion of India by Aryans may have been attempts at conquest on the part of the Persian monarchy under Cyrus and his successors. Persia in the days of her great developments of powerful empire certainly brought India into touch with Europe, and it was through the Persians that the Greeks, and after them the Latins, first became aware of the existence of this wonderful peninsula with its rich and varied products.

When Alexander the Macedonian headed the Greek peoples in an attack on Persia he carried his victorious arms right across that country to the frontiers of India in 327 B.C. He crossed the Indus and penetrated as far eastwards as the Béas River, near its junction with the Sutlej.<sup>1</sup> He established several military settlements of Greeks in the Panjab and left a large body of his soldiers in Baktria (Northern Afghanistan), where a Greek kingdom was founded which lasted for centuries. His general, Seleukos, who after his death became king over much of Western Asia, introduced much Greek influence into Northern India, and thenceforth India was never again detached from the knowledge and the interest of Europe. Soon after the beginning of the Christian era India was again invaded from the north by the Greeks of Baktria (a settlement which was older than the conquest of Alexander, and was known as Ionian or Yavan), by Persians or Parthians, and by the Saka, a people possibly of Aryan type from Central Asia. Then came the invasions of the

<sup>1</sup> For the Greek names of the Panjab rivers, see pp. 300, 305.

Yue-chi or Kushan conquerors from Central Asia. This people may have been Mongolian, akin in origin to the Tarks and to the Huns. They were indeed followed up some centuries afterwards by the "white" Huns, who poured into India from the direction of Afghanistan and extended their sway as far south as Central India. Although they soon, like other conquerors, became swamped by the mass of the Indian population, they probably founded the ruling families in many Hindu tribes in the north and north centre of India; and in the second century of the Christian era one of their kings, Kanishka, not only ruled over all Afghanistan, Kashmir, and North-western India, but as a great Buddhist monarch extended his sway or influence across the Dekkan to southernmost India at Madurá.

About five hundred years before the time of Christ, a great religion—Buddhism, in some ways a foreshadowing of Christianity—had arisen in Northern India, and spread thence in the next five centuries into Afghanistan and Tatory, besides extending all over India to Ceylon and penetrating to Tibet, China, Japan, Siam, and Burma. The older religion—Brahmanism—which had grown up out of a union between the pure and lofty religious beliefs of the first Aryan conquerors and the s'ly and often cruel forms of worship amongst the black aborigines, gave way before the teaching of Siddhattha Gotama—the "Buddha" or "Enlightened", a prince of Aryan descent and of the Sakya clan—whose faith was largely spread by many disciples. But about eleven hundred years ago (800 A.D.) Buddhism was gradually supplanted throughout continental India by a revival of the old religion of Brahma, which, however, had absorbed and been changed by a great deal of Buddha's teaching.



## Pioneers in India

Immediately after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., and even before that event, Jewish merchants had wandered into western and southern Arabia; and from Aden and similar ports had no doubt made their way to the Indian coast as traders in precious stones. At any rate, by about 100 A.D. there was a small Jewish colony on the coast near Bombay, and soon afterwards another colony was established at Cochin, much farther to the south, the descendants of which, the "black" Jews, remain to this day. These Jewish colonies along the southern coast of India acted no doubt as seed plots for Christianity. Jews who in religion had become Christian must have found their way to India in the great Roman trading fleets as early as the beginning of the second century of the Christian era. India was then mainly Buddhist in religion, and the Buddhists found so much in the teaching of Christian missionaries which resembled their own faith that they did not oppose either Jews or Christians from settling or teaching.

Intercourse between Roman Egypt and India and Ceylon was much developed from the reign of the first Roman Emperor, Augustus, and became especially busy during the second century of our era. Once a year, in time for the south-west monsoon wind, a large fleet of merchant vessels left an Egyptian port on the Red Sea and sailed past Aden a little way along the coast of Arabia, then steered boldly out to sea towards the Malabar coast of India. The use of the south-west monsoon wind had been discovered by Hippalus, a Roman sea captain, in about 50 A.D. In this trading fleet undoubtedly travelled men who were Christian in religion but probably Syrians in nationality.<sup>1</sup> Such men taught Christianity

<sup>1</sup> One such early Christian traveller in India seems to have borne the name of

and made converts early in the second century, and by about 190 A.D. the Christian community on the south-west coast of India was sufficiently numerous for the Bishop of Alexandria to think it time to dispatch a regular envoy or trained missionary to teach orthodox Christianity to the kings and peoples of India. This pioneer missionary was named Pantæus, and was a man of great learning.

But in the succeeding centuries, for some unexplained reason, India slipped away from the influence of those who called themselves the "orthodox" Christians, and was brought within the fold of the East Syrian and Persian Church, known as "Nestorian", and founded in Edessa and South-west Persia by the followers of Nestorius, the patriarch of Constantinople, who was adjudged heretical and deposed by the Synod of Ephesus in 431. A later sect arose in Syria in the sixth century, the followers of Iakobos<sup>1</sup> Baradaïos, which became in time the Jacobite Church of Jerusalem and Antioch, and eventually brought within its fold the Nestorian Christians of Southern India. These last originated in Persian refugees who fled to Buddhist Afghanistan and India before the persecutions of the Magians or Fire-worshippers. In course of time they were mainly Indian in race, intermixed with a little

Bartolomæus (Bartholomew), and thus to have given rise to the legend that the Apostle Bartholomew was the founder of the Malabar Church of South India. An equally false legend attributed the origin of Christianity in Southern India to the Apostle St. Thomas, who was supposed to have been buried near Madras. There was, perhaps, a Persian missionary named Thomas in Malabar about 277 A.D., and the historical visit of Mar (or Bishop) Thomas, an Armenian, really took place about 750 A.D.

<sup>1</sup> Iakob (Jacob) is, of course, the name that was corrupted into the Italian Giacomo and the English James, and was the name of two of the Apostles. In after years the Syrian Church declared that it had been founded by the Apostle James, the son of Zebedee, or James the brother of Jesus, which was as untrue as the legend—long believed in—that the South Indian Church of Malabar had been founded by the Apostle Thomas or the Apostle Bartolmai (Bartholomew). But for a long time the Christians of Northern India and Afghanistan were known as the Christians of St. Thomas, and those of Southern India as the Christians of St. Bartholomew.

Persian and Syrian blood. Their Christian religion freed them from many absurd and fettering practices which bound the Hindus and Buddhists not to do this or that or to eat such and such food. At the same time they were orderly, law-abiding, and brave. Consequently they became sought after by Indian kings as guards and trustworthy warriors, and so in time became quite a privileged class. Later there came on the scene Armenian Christians, but these—unlike the Catholics of Europe—made common cause with the Nestorians, and both sects encouraged trade between India and the countries of the Mediterranean.

After the division of the Roman Empire into East and West, and the rise into great power of the Constantinople emperors, the trade between the Red Sea ports of Egypt and India was much quickened, and Greeks or "Rumi" (Romans) became noted visitors at Diu, Cambay, the Malabar coast towns, and those of Ceylon. One of these Egyptian-Greek trader-travellers, Cosmas of Alexandria—nicknamed Indicopleustes, because of his alleged acquaintance with India—has left us an account of his travels and his geographical theories. It is not certain that he actually landed on the coast of India, but probable that he did so—at Diu, at Cambay, or in the Malabar district. It is more likely that he visited Ceylon, where he picked up the definite information, which he afterwards published, that to reach China by sea it was necessary and easy to round the extremity of Further India (the Malay Peninsula).

Under the Byzantine emperors, whose dynasties commenced with the election of Leo the Isaurian in 717, European commerce with India increased remarkably, especially in connection with the trade in silk, while Indian diamonds began to figure in the regalia of

European monarchs, and India rapidly became a land of romance, credited with enormous wealth in gold and silver and precious stones.

In the eighth century of the Christian era, however, a new religion was claiming to be heard in the west of India. This was the faith taught by Muhammad, the prophet of Arabia. As early as 664 A.D. the Arabs had conquered Persia and invaded the Panjab province of India, and in 711 they invaded Sind, to the east of Baluchistan, but they were driven out forty years afterwards by a Hindu rising. After this for two hundred years the relations of the Moslems with India were peaceful. But during this time they settled numerously as traders in all the seaports of India and Ceylon, and even in those of Sumatra, the Malay Peninsula, and Java.

In 977 A.D. the Turks first began to plague India with their invasions. They had become ardent disciples of the Muhammadan religion, and were rapidly usurping the authority and the power of the Arabs, who after the tenth century were never again a ruling race. The most famous of these early conquerors was Mahmud of Ghazni (Afghanistan). He penetrated into India as far south as the peninsula of Gujarat, where he ravaged a famous temple erected to the god Siva. From this time onwards, Muhammadan Afghans, Turks, and Mongols continued to invade India and found dynasties, until the creation in 1526 of the Mughal (Mogul) Empire by Baber, a great-great grandson of Timur or Timur-i-leng (Tamerlane),<sup>1</sup> brought about the establishment for two centuries of more peaceful conditions.

<sup>1</sup> Timur was the descendant of a Tatar general who had fought in the campaigns of Jenghiz Khan, the first great Mongol conqueror, who in the twelfth century conquered and ruled from Manchuria to Poland.

## Pioneers in India

Henceforth there was no great or lasting invasion of India by land, except an occasional raid from Persia or Afghanistan. The next attempts on the part of the white man to enter India and Malaysia were to be by the sea routes.

The Turks, who have played such a striking part in the history of Asia and eastern Europe during the last fourteen hundred years, are in origin a branch of the Mongolian race of yellow-skinned, small-nosed, flat-faced men, which several thousand years ago became the predominating human type in north and central Asia and in north-east Europe. They were allied in origin, not only to the Mongols or Tatars and the Manchus, but also to the Finns and Magyars, and still more so to the Yakuts and other peoples of northernmost Siberia. But as they migrated westwards and southwards from the northern borders of China they absorbed more and more of the preceding "Aryan" Caucasian race, and so lost the very Mongolian look of the Mongols and Tatars, and at last were not easily distinguishable in appearance from the handsome peoples of Baktria, Persia, and Asia Minor, whom they subdued and with whom they freely mingled.

The Tatars or Mongols<sup>1</sup> (as distinguished from the Turks) who formed the hordes which originated to the north and north-east of China proper, and ravaged, conquered, and ruled three-fourths of Asia between the eleventh and the sixteenth centuries, are described by the early European pioneers of Indian exploration in the Middle Ages as having complexions so burnt by the

<sup>1</sup> The name Tatar (formerly misspelt "Tartar") is derived from the Ta-ta clan of Mongolia. Mongol was written in Arabic "Mughal", and so gave rise to *Mogul*, the form most commonly used in Indian histories. The Tatars of Russia, however, were mainly of Turkish race.

## The Invaders of India

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fierce sun and wind of the Asiatic steppes "that they looked like folk just come from Hell". They had broad faces, little eyes, and small beards, and were very wrinkled. They are frequently described by the Christian travellers of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries as resembling withered monkeys. Despite their ugliness, however, they thought very highly of themselves, and were rather ceremonious in their manners. They disliked dwelling in cities, and were essentially nomads, accustomed to wander over the plains in winter and summer alike with great flocks of sheep, horses, and two-humped camels. Their cattle were not numerous, and the milk which played such an important part in their diet was more often the milk of mares and of ewes. In summertime they sowed cotton, millet-corn, pumpkins, and water-melons by the sides of streams, and waited to reap their harvests before seeking winter quarters where there would be good pasturage for their flocks and herds. Like the North American Indians, whom in many respects they resembled, they could go without food for several days and yet retain their activity and strength, but when able to do so they made up for this by gorging on half-cooked meat, or ate a kind of porridge made of sour milk, water, and flour. The countries of rigorous climates in which they had lived for thousands of years had hardened them to great extremes of heat and cold: the wind in the summer on these baking steppes being like the blast from a furnace, while in the winter it was biting cold. The Tatars became accustomed to struggle through terrific sandstorms and blizzards of snow, to swim across deep rivers, and to scale rocky mountains of tremendous height. They were splendid horsemen, and of course were only able to traverse the immense distances covered by their con-

quests—between Korea on the east, Poland on the west, the Arctic Ocean on the north, and Central India on the south—by means of their horses—rough, sturdy ponies we should consider them to-day. Men, women, and children rode so well that they formed one body with the horse. The men and boys were skilled archers, and the bow and arrow was their principal weapon. The women wore extraordinary headdresses,<sup>1</sup> like a human foot and leg poised on the tops of their heads; they wielded great influence over the tribe and the fighting men, and were ready enough to use arms themselves on the enemies of the tribe. Their burial customs, like those of Negro Africa, entailed the sacrifice of slaves and horses to accompany the dead soldier or chief to the next world. They are said to have had an abhorrence of lying, yet they held clever thieves in high esteem. They entertained the greatest respect for their kings or their chiefs, and for their *shamans* (medicine men or priests). They were exceedingly addicted to drunkenness, and thought no shame attached to this vice or any severe blame to the crimes committed under its influence.

As to their behaviour towards the countries they invaded and the races they subdued, it may be said that they knew no pity and were stupid and ruthless in their destruction, a disposition which has characterized the very similar Turks. Timur the Lame, who invaded India at the age of sixty-two (in 1398) and who was the ancestor of the Mughal Emperors of India, in his wars with the Turks in Asia Minor would have the little children collected in conquered cities and strewn on the open ground,

<sup>1</sup> This headdress is described by Friar Odoric as being like the foot and leg of a man, about 24 inches long. At the top were plumes of crane feathers, and the queens and wives of great chiefs wound strings of pearls round the headdress.

so that he might ride over them and trample them to death under his horse's hoofs. When the Mongols invaded Russia they slaughtered the unarmed inhabitants without regard to age or sex, impaled many on stakes, flayed others to death, or had spikes or splinters driven under their finger nails, or roasted them alive. When a king or a great chief died, it was the custom to slaughter anyone who might be encountered on the road when his body was being conveyed to its distant burial place, and in this way, according to the Venetian, Marco Polo, twenty thousand persons were massacred when the great ruler Kublai Khan was being borne to his resting place. Whole tribes were wiped out of existence. The slaughter of a hundred thousand men, women, and children might follow on the capture of a town or a district. Consequently the Tatar conquests were frequently followed by famines and pestilences which exterminated what remained of the population.

The Afghans, of whom we hear so much in the history of India during the last nine hundred years, are a people of very mixed origin and type. One or two of the tribes now most powerful claim to be descended from some of the ten lost tribes of Israel deported by the great kings of Persia into the north-eastern parts of their dominions; and certainly these Durani Afghans look very Jewish in type of face. Others, again, are like the bushy-bearded, long-faced Persians, or resemble dark-skinned Greeks, and are descended from the Greek settlers in Baktria and Afghanistan, or recall in their appearance a handsome type of European, with brown hair, yellow moustaches, and grey eyes—belonging, no doubt, to the primitive Aryan stock of west-central Asia. There is also a considerable Turkish and a Tatar element. But all these



types are more or less united by speaking one language, Pukhtu, which is an outlying member of the Persian group of Aryan tongues. Persian itself is the polite language of Afghanistan, and until the middle of the eighteenth century Afghanistan formed part of the Persian Empire; unless it were joined with north-west India under the rule of some Turkish or Mongol conqueror.

As to the condition of India after it was first invaded in force by Muhammadan Afghan and Turkish armies in 1001 A.D., it is a ghastly record of bloodshed and human misery, more especially from 1245 A.D., when the Mongols or Mughals burst into Bengal from Tibet, and into the Panjab from Afghanistan. The Turki<sup>1</sup> ruler of the Slave line of Delhi Sultans, Balban, massacred one hundred thousand Hindus to the south of Delhi. The records of the subsequent wars between the invading Mughals and the Turki Sultans of the Slave dynasty simply teem with accounts of massacres of captive chiefs who were trampled to death by elephants, while their surrendered soldiers were butchered till the armed conquerors were worn out with slaying. The great Turki Sultan, Alā-ad-Din, brought about the death of thirteen thousand women when he captured the stronghold of Chitor. Another Turki Sultan of the Tughlak dynasty must have killed in one way or another about a million of his subjects. One of his amusements when Hindu peasants had trespassed on his game preserves was to have a man-hunt. His army would surround an immense tract of country in a circle, and then gradually converge towards the centre, slaughtering all human beings thus enclosed. When Timur defeated the successor of this monster under the walls of Delhi, in 1398, and entered that city, he instituted a five days'

<sup>1</sup> Muhammadan Turk, from Northern Afghanistan.



From a photograph by G. P. Latham

# TYPICAL AFGHANS

Royal Geographical Society's Collection



massacre, during which the streets were rendered impassable by heaps of dead. Before leaving Delhi he visited one of its mosques and publicly offered up a sincere and humble tribute of thanks to God for his victory, and then proceeded to Mirat, where he carried out another massacre.

Consequently, when Europeans, represented by the Portuguese, first arrived with great naval strength on the coast of India, they were welcomed by the Hindu population in the hope that they might relieve them to a certain extent of the frightful miseries entailed by the Muhammadan raids and conquests.

## CHAPTER II

### India in the Middle Ages

The invasion of Syria and Egypt by the Crusaders intensified the interest of mediæval Europe in the Indian trade. India produced spices, peppers, beautiful woven stuffs of cotton and silk, perfumes and ivory,<sup>1</sup> which were required by the European peoples as far to the west as England and Ireland. Alfred the Great is even said to have sent an envoy to find the way to India. This was Sighelm of Sherborne, in Dorsetshire, who, in 883 A.D., together with another Englishman named Athelstane, conveyed King Alfred's alms or tribute to the Pope at Rome, and thence made his way, apparently, as far east as Alexandria in Egypt, or he may even have got as far as the shrine of St. Thomas, at Edessa, in Northern Syria. Almost all the regions of Asia beyond Syria and Asia Minor were known as "India" to the mediæval geographers.

The invasion of Russia by the Tatars brought east-central Europe somewhat into touch with Eastern Asia, and to this Tatar invasion are due some of our modern types of domestic animals, which thus penetrated from

<sup>1</sup> Amongst the principal things exported from India to Europe by way of the Persian Gulf and the Byzantine Empire, or the Red Sea and the Venetian trade in the Middle Ages were precious stones, ivory, pepper, ginger, indigo, "dragon's blood", and other dyes, incense, alum, aloes, quicksilver or cinnabar, the cassia drug, ammoniac, cinnamon, opium, gum-mastic, ambergris, silk, saffron, cloves, cubebs, rhubarb, mace, camphor, nutmegs, spikenard, cardamoms, borax, gum-arabic, muslins, cotton cloths, velvets, damasks, silks, gold-embroidered cloth, canvas, and hemp.

China to Europe. The Genoese and Venetians had opened up trade with the Black Sea and the coasts of Southern Russia, and so got into relations with the more settled and civilized of the Tatar tribes. When the mischief and trouble of the Crusades were over, the Popes of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries became much interested in the prospects of a peaceful conversion to Christianity of such races and nations of Central and Eastern Asia as had not been already won over to the faith of Muhammad. They therefore urged zealous monks and priests, as well as traders, to make their way through the Tatar and Turkish countries to the Far East. The celebrated MARCO POLO was a Venetian whose father and uncle had in this manner visited Central Asia between 1260 and 1271; and Marco Polo, after travelling from Russia to China, turned south and reached the Malay Peninsula and Islands. He made his way back to Europe across the Indian Ocean by way of Ceylon and the Red Sea. In 1292 John of Monte Corvino (Italy), whom the Pope afterwards made Archbishop of Peking, reached India overland through Persia, and spent thirteen months in the Indian Peninsula before travelling to China through Malaysia.

JOHN OF MONTE CORVINO was a Franciscan friar who first went as a missionary amongst the Tatars and Mongols of Persia. About 1290 he left Tabriz in company with a Christian (probably Armenian) merchant and journeyed to India by way of the Persian Gulf. He seems to have embarked at Hormuz in what would be called at the present day a *dau*: a sailing boat, "flimsy and uncouth, without nails or iron of any sort, sewn together with twine . . . having but one mast, one sail of matting, and some ropes

of husk". In this crazy craft he sailed to the coasts of Malabar and Coromandel. As he travelled south he noticed the disappearance of the Pole Star, and he described Southern India as a land of great cities and wretched houses, few hills, scanty rivers, many springs, with horses only in the stables of princes, and, above all, a land without *fleas*—an extraordinary statement, if it be not due to a misprint, for India—to its cost, in the spread of plague and other flea-conveyed diseases—swarms more with these pests at the present day than any other part of the world. Cattle were sacred, and idolatry was rampant, though the Muhammadans were well received on the coast and often furnished governors for the coast ports under the Hindu rajas. The Christians, like the Jews, were despised, annoyed and persecuted by the Muhammadans. In this land of perpetual summer one might witness sowing and reaping and fruit-gathering at all times. Above all, the country produced quantities of aromatic spices; there were trees (probably he refers to the palms) which yielded sugar, honey, and a liquor like wine; there were ginger with enormous roots, and the wonderful "Indian nuts" (coconuts), as big as melons and as green as gourds, growing on trees like date palms. Cinnamon spice came from a tree resembling a laurel in appearance; it was derived from an island close to Malabar (Ceylon). The people of this part of India were olive-skinned, not black, with well-formed but hairy bodies, and scrupulously clean, feeding on milk and rice, eating no meat and drinking no wine.

From the south of India, John of Monte Corvino seems to have crossed over to the Malay Peninsula, probably landing on the coast of Pegu, and thence to have made his way past Cochin China to Canton and Peking, where

he became eventually Archbishop of the Roman Church. He remained in China till his death in 1328, the first *European* missionary who preached Christianity in India and China: for those who founded the churches of St. Bartholomew, St. Thomas, or of St. James were Egyptian Greeks, Syrians, Persians, or Armenians.

Edward I of England, encouraged to do so by the Genoese,<sup>1</sup> sent an envoy in 1292 to greet the Tatar King of Persia at Tabriz. This action definitely fixed the attention of Englishmen on the countries of Asia as a market for their woollen cloth, and such other manufactures as were springing up in England and Ireland under the teaching of the Flemings and Italians.

By the middle of the thirteenth century missionaries of the Roman Church, especially of the Dominican order, had penetrated into Armenia, the regions of the Caucasus, Northern Persia, and Tatar.<sup>2</sup> When the Mongols or Tatars conquered Persia and Mesopotamia they were not Muhammadans, but had brought with them from the far north a vague faith in witch doctors or shamans, very similar to the beliefs of the North American Indians, with whom, racially, the Tatars have certainly some distant kinship. Until the fourteenth century A.D. they made no decided change of faith, and then the Tatars of the west, especially of Persia, Asia Minor, and Mesopotamia, adopted Muhammadanism like their Turkish relations in the same region, and became inimical to Christianity; while those of the east and north became Buddhists through their intercourse with Tibet. But until these changes had taken place their great khakhans or soldier-emperors were well

<sup>1</sup> The Genoese, who then occupied a very strong position on the coasts of the Black Sea, were intensely jealous of Venice, and sought, therefore, to draw the English, Portuguese, and Spanish to their side.

<sup>2</sup> By Tatar may be understood the region marked as Turkestan on modern maps.



inclined towards Christianity, and received with some favour the missionary envoys from the Pope of Rome, probably because their occasional warfare with the Greeks of the Byzantine Empire prejudiced them against the Greek Church. In the middle of the fourteenth century a revival of national feeling in China for a while drove out the overruling Tatar element, and with it the Nestorian and the Roman Christians. But up to this time Christian missionaries and merchants might be sure of a kindly welcome in China.

ODORIC OF PORDENONE, in Friuli (probably a German or a Bohemian in origin, and a friar of the Franciscan or Minorite order), started in 1316 to become a missionary in China. Part of the way, at any rate, he seems to have been accompanied by another Franciscan missionary from Udine, named James and said to have been an Irishman. Odoric went by sea from Italy to Trebizond on the coast of the Black Sea, and so across Armenia to Tabriz in Persia, and thence to the Persian Gulf and the Island of Ormuz. From Ormuz he sailed to Salsette, near Bombay, in India, soon afterwards reaching Surat about 1325. Surat was then, and for some centuries afterwards, a very important port of Western India. At this place he found that four preceding Catholic missionaries had been murdered by the natives, and although they had been buried by the direction of a Dominican bishop, Odoric took the bones out of the Indian tomb, wrapped them in fair napkins, and carried them with him all the way to China for safer and more honourable interment. From Tana (Salsette) he took ship again to continue his roundabout journey to China. He sailed past the south extremity of India to the vicinity of Madras, whence he crossed the



A CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY FRIAR LANDING IN SOUTHERN INDIA (14th CENTURY)



Bay of Bengal to Sumatra, and made his way past Java and Borneo to Cochin China, till at length he reached China itself. He stayed three years in Pekin, and his return journey to Europe was made through Tibet, Afghanistan, and Northern Persia.

In the account of his journeys, which he dictated or wrote on his return (besides interesting descriptions of Persia and China which do not come within the scope of the present narrative), he gave much information about India, Malaysia, and Tibet. In India he described the fire-worship of the Parsis (Persian refugees in India, driven out of Persia in the eighth century), the veneration amongst the Brahmans or Hindus of the ox, of certain trees, and of serpents; the monstrous idols by which the Hindu gods were represented; the burning of widows (*satti*); the golden roofs and pavements of their temples; their methods of committing suicide in honour of their gods; their pilgrimages, religious starvation, and cruel penances. He describes the fruit-bats as large as pigeons, and huge cane-rats as big as dogs (bandicoots); the black tigers occasionally to be seen in native menageries; the climbing pepper plant, resembling a vine in its growth and in its clusters of fruit, and ivy in its leaves; the ginger of Quilon (southernmost India), and the civil wars raging between the Jews and Christians of these regions of ginger and pepper, the Jews being in some settlements "black" in complexion, and in others white; while the dark-skinned Jews of Cochin claimed to be the most ancient of origin.

Odoric probably saw the coast of Ceylon, even if he did not land there, but the description he gives of this Island of "Sillan" is rather vague, though he mentions the birds as big as geese with two heads (which have been identified as the helmeted hornbills), the lofty Adam's

Peak, the rubies and pearls found in the mountains and on the coasts of Ceylon, and the blood-sucking leeches swarming in the herbage. In Northern Sumatra he remarks that the natives go completely naked and are cannibals, eating man's flesh like beef. These naked cannibals—the modern Batta—had apparently heard of the story of Adam from Arab merchants, and turned the tables on Odoric, when he expressed himself as shocked at their nakedness, by asking if God had not made Adam naked, and that being the case, why did one who believed in this story of the Creation pile clothes on his own body? Some of these people seared their faces (as is often done amongst the negroes of Africa) with hot iron to raise scars for ornament. But these barbarous folk had plenty of commodities to trade in. Corn and rice, cattle, gold, aloes, and camphor. Java he described as being thickly inhabited, and producing many valuable drugs and spices, and being ruled over by a powerful emperor under whom there were seven subordinate kings. This emperor lived in a palace with a staircase the steps of which were alternately gold and silver, while the pavement was gold on one side and silver on the other. The ceilings were of pure gold, and the walls were covered with gold plates which framed painted pictures.

He describes the sago and the palm sugar of Borneo, and the poison obtained from the sap or bark of certain trees, which was used to envenom the darts shot with such force from the native blowpipes; also the clumps of gigantic bamboos in Borneo rising to 60 feet in height or length. His description of making sago from the palms<sup>1</sup> is quite sufficient to show (points out Professor

<sup>1</sup> *Metroxylon sagu*. The "sago" is the starchy part found between the outer wood of the trunk and the inner core. This palm seldom grows to more than 30 feet, and only in very marshy regions.

- C. Raymond Beazley in his *Dawn of Modern Geography* that Odoric really had landed in Borneo and witnessed personally the manufacture of this product.

On his wonderful overland journey back from Peking to Europe he passed through Tibet, which he calls Tybot, but which he apparently confuses with the adjoining Kashmir, for he writes that it possessed more bread and wine than any other country, a statement then true about Kashmir. Yet he describes quite correctly the walls of Lhasa, decorated with the black and white horns of sheep; the black felt tents of the nomad Tibetans, whose women wore their hair in hundreds of plaits and ornamented with tusks; the great reverence felt for the priestly ruler, the Grand Lama; and the reverent cannibalism of the Tibetans, who thought to act most kindly towards their dead relations by cooking and eating their corpses or by exposing them to be eaten by eagles and vultures, while their skulls were cleaned and made into drinking vessels for family use.

In 1321, a French Dominican monk of Sévérac, in South-west France, named JORDANUS, or Jordan, was sent out by Rome to evangelize India. He was accompanied by three Italian friars and an Armenian lay brother. They followed the usual route by the Black Sea to Persia and the Persian Gulf, and thence to South-west India. They intended to land at Kulam, in Travancore—the modern Quilon or Kayenkolam, a place which under the mistaken name of “Columbum” figures considerably in the early history of Christian India—but against their will were taken to Tana, near Bombay. Jordanus went off to Surat to visit a Nestorian Christian community, but heard that his four colleagues had been arrested and imprisoned by the

Muhammadans of Tana, and shortly afterwards that they had been executed. After their death he remained two and a half years, labouring amongst the Hindu people of the Baruch district in Gujarat. He found that the Hindus of this region had a deep respect for "Latin" Europeans (namely, those that were not Greeks), and prophesied that before long the Europeans would come in numbers to India. They longed for this to take place, as it might be some set-off against the tyranny of the Muhammadans. Jordanus advised the Pope to establish a Latin fleet upon the Indian Ocean. If only this could be done a shrewd blow would be dealt against the power of the Sultan of Egypt, who at that time really commanded the sea route to India.

About 1328 Jordanus selected Kulam, in Travancore, as the centre of his future work. In the remarkable treatise on the geography of Asia which Jordanus wrote whilst residing at Kulam (nothing is known of his life after 1330), and perhaps published about 1340, a wonderful mass of information on Western, Central, and Southern Asia was presented to the educated world of that day. He began his description of India with Baluchistan and Sind, describing the intolerable heat of this region in the summertime, its scarcity of rain, partially compensated for by the heavy dews, its very dark, almost black-skinned, naked people, the ginger and sugar cane. As to the coast regions east of the Indus, he describes the abundance of peacocks and green parrots, the Fan or Palmyra palm (*Borassus*), the coconut and all its products—milk from the nut, wine from the sap of the trunk, thatch and twine from the fibre and the fronds; the jack-fruit, the mango, the sugar cane, and the ginger root. As to the fauna of India, he delineates the one-horned Indian

rhinoceros, but points out that it has nothing to do with the mythical unicorn. In Southern India he describes the elephant, which had become such a docile beast of burden and transport under the control of the natives. He alludes to the big bandicoot rats (*Nesokia*), to the white ants, which destroy timber, and to the large, "mason" wasps, the bold kites, and the white and russet fishing-eagles, and the many wonderful and beautiful birds of the Indian islands. Nor do he and some subsequent missionary travellers overlook the contrast between the civilized Hindus and Moslems and the savage forest tribes of the interior and of the mountains, living in caves, wearing no clothing, and of brutish aspect. Indeed, the now-celebrated Veddas of Ceylon, one of the most primitive races in existing humanity, are alluded to as early as the literature of the fourteenth century by a successor of Jordanus, Bishop Giovanni dei Marignolli, of Florence, likewise a member of the Franciscan order.

Jordanus, according to his own statement, was four times imprisoned in Muhammadan dungeons on the coast of India, and was scourged, stoned, and tortured by these same fanatical Saracens. But he repeatedly expresses the opinion in his writings that, although the size of India is great, and its population enormous, the Indian people are but children in the art of war or even seamanship. One seaman from Europe was worth a hundred of the cowards sailing the Indian Ocean, with their dread of a little breeze and the state of panic into which they fell over the management of their ships in rough weather. Jordanus declared that the King of France, without the aid of anyone, possessed sufficient strength in armed men to conquer India. This land, he declared, was fairer than any other, its food more



savoury, its people more honest and much more moral than the Christians of Europe.

GIOVANNI DEI MARIGNOLLI, already referred to, was sent by Pope Benedict XII with three other envoys to the great Tatar khan then ruling China and Central Asia, and to the Christian princes of the Alan tribe of Turks. After spending three years in Peking, they journeyed southwards down the coast of China in 1346, and round the Malay Peninsula to Southern India. Marignolli remained for sixteen months at Kulam in Travancore. From this place he set out to visit the shrine of St. Thomas, near Madras, and then apparently went over to Java (of which country he gave a fantastic account), thence returning to Ceylon, and from Ceylon to Europe (1350) by way of the Persian Gulf, Mesopotamia, and Cyprus. He spent four months in Ceylon, where he was robbed of all the presents that he was taking back from the Great Khan of China to the Pope. But like so many travellers of that age, he was impressed to an exaggerated degree with the appearance of Adam's Peak. This mountain he believed to be higher than any other in the world, and to be only overtopped by Paradise itself; for in the beliefs of that day the Garden of Eden had been removed miraculously to the top of some extremely lofty tableland. [This belief reappears in the journeys of the Spanish explorers in North and South America in the sixteenth century.] Marignolli argued that the earthly paradise existed in central Ceylon, forty miles distant from Adam's Peak, and that the four rivers emerging from the fountains of Eden passed under the mountain and the intervening seas to reach Mesopotamia and Africa.

A German soldier named Joharn or HANS SCHILTBERGER left his home in central Bavaria in 1394, at the age of fourteen, to fight as a volunteer in the Hungarian army against the Muhammadan Turks, who had just begun to invade Europe. He was wounded at the battle of Nikopolis, where he was serving as a runner in the suite of a German noble. In the great defeat at that place of the Hungarian army he was taken prisoner by the Turks, but was spared from slaughter on account of his youth, and sent as a page to Constantinople, where no doubt he was obliged to become a Muhammadan in the service of the Turkish Sultan Bajazet. Then, after the defeat of the Turks by the Tatars under Timur-i-Leng in 1402, as one master after another died or disappeared, Schiltberger passed through the hands of a number of Tatar princes or generals, in whose service he travelled over many parts of Asia Minor, Caucasia, Central Asia, and Siberia, and back again to Russia, Western Tatar, and Circassia, from which region he managed to escape and travel to Constantinople, still in the hands of the Greeks, and thence back to Germany. In the book which he wrote after his return he attempts to describe India as though he had visited that peninsula, but it is doubtful whether he did more than reach Afghanistan. Yet the descriptions he gives of Southern India and its three kinds of pepper, its lemons or limes (then quite new to all Europe except Italy), its elephants and parrots, show that he must have conversed with men who knew India well. Like some others among the rare European visitors to India at this period, he gives an elaborate description of the giraffe as though it were an Indian animal. This, as a matter of fact, it has not been probably for many thousands of years, though giraffes

once existed in Northern India in the Pliocene period. But the two or three giraffes described on different occasions by these early European explorers of Southern Asia were presents to Tatar kings from the Mamluk Sultans of Egypt.

After Marignolli left India, in about 1350, it is probable that European Christian missionaries and travellers ceased to come there owing to the hostility displayed by the Muhammadans of the western coast line. Moreover, Northern and Central India from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century was convulsed with continual invasions by Muhammadans from the north, mainly of Turkish, Afghan, and Mongol (Mughal) origin—foreign conquerors who employed in their armies and navies not a few Abyssinians and East African negroes. Afghan adventurers even founded Muhammadan kingdoms in Southern India. During all this period, India from the Tibetan frontier to the Nilgiri Mountains was soaked in blood: Mongols, Turks, Afghans, or negroids of Muhammadan religion fighting against Hindus descended from the old Aryan conquerors of India or Hindus of Dravidian race and speech—Tamil and Telugu. And, again, Muhammadan Afghans fought against Muhammadan Mongols or Turks, and all the Muhammadans in general were inspired with a deadly hatred towards the Christian. The only chance which Christian Europeans possessed of seeing anything of India with safety was to visit the southern regions, still more or less under the sway of Hindu rajas, and attainable by a sea voyage from ports of the Red Sea.

By the middle of the fourteenth century the Venetians and, in a lesser degree, the Genoese had got into friendly

relations with the Mamluk or Slave Sultans of Egypt (see p. 54), and thus occasionally Christian Italians were able to travel in Arab ships from the ports of Egypt and Western Arabia to Southern India. NICOLÒ DEI CONTI, a Venetian merchant, who had resided for some time at Damascus, and apparently had married there and acquired fluency in Arabic, started on a journey to the East about 1430, taking with him his wife (who may have been a native of Syria). Children were born to them on the way, and for greater security for himself and his family Conti passed as a Muhammadan. They travelled across Northern Arabia to Baghdad, and thence to the Persian Gulf, where they noticed the sea "rising and falling after the manner of the Atlantic Ocean", a noteworthy feature to a Venetian accustomed to the tideless Mediterranean. From the island of Hormuz, at the east end of the Gulf, they made their way to an important trading city on the east coast of Persia called "Calacatia"—possibly Jask. Here Conti resided for some time and learnt the Persian language, which was his means of communication throughout much of his travels.<sup>1</sup> He also adopted the Persian dress, and covenanted with some Persian merchants to freight with him a ship and to travel together as faithful and loyal companions.

Thus they arrived at the great city of Cambay (see

<sup>1</sup> Hindustani—or "Urdu", the camp language of the Mongol conquerors—did not come into existence or general use as a universal means of communication throughout India until the end of the seventeenth century. (Hindustani, now the most important language of India and Further India, has as its basis the Western Hindi of Central North India, one of the many forms of speech in Northern India derived from the Sanskrit-like mother tongue of the early Aryan invaders. To this stock have been added many Arabic words and ideas and some Turkish.) Persian for a long time was the French, the polite language of the Muhammadan courts and princes of India. But the language of the seaports of Western and Southern India was Arabic, while elsewhere in Southern India, on the coasts of Ceylon and even Burma the medium of intercourse for strangers down to the seventeenth century seems to have been a corrupt form of Malayalam or Tamil.

pp. 65, 66), and after resuming their coast journey landed at some Kanarese port, and made their way to the capital of the great Hindu kingdom of Vijáyanagar. From this point they crossed to the eastern coast of Southern India near Madras and voyaged to Ceylon, where they visited the cinnamon groves and a remarkable city, three miles round, situated on an island in the middle of a lake: Padaviga possibly.

Conti noticed that the people of Ceylon were governed by "a race of Brahmans"—probably meaning by that the light-coloured Sinhalese aristocracy—speaking an Aryan language and very distinct from the wild, naked Veddass or forest tribes, or the dark-skinned, almost negroid Tamils of the northern part of the island. But he did not observe the difference in religion between the Buddhists of Ceylon and the Hindus of Southern India.

From Ceylon he and his companions sailed across the Bay of Bengal to Sumatra, where they noticed the Batta cannibal head-hunters of the central part—a people which fascinated these mediæval travellers by their horrible customs and who are mentioned in the writings of many pioneers in the East Indies. Conti stated that their trade currency was the skulls of their enemies, which were trafficked in as though they were objects of the greatest value. But Conti also observed the gold, the camphor, and the two kinds of pepper which Sumatra produced, and the wonderful Durian fruit, "the size of a pumpkin, and containing within five smaller fruits resembling oblong oranges". This fruit so delicious of taste (as regards its inside capsules), but so nauseous of smell, reminded Conti of cheese! From Sumatra he and his companions passed to Tenasserim (see p. 94). Here they were struck with the abundance of elephants and of a bird called, in the

Latin account of these travels, a "thrush", probably the mina starling, which sings and whistles like a thrush.

At the delta of the Ganges, Conti states that there were "reeds" (bamboos) so lofty and of such enormous girth that one section between the nodes or knots of the stem made a serviceable fishing boat! On the banks of the Ganges were to be seen charming villas and gardens and plantations of delicious-tasting bananas, a fruit which his transcriber calls *musa*, for the word banana was of a later, West African origin.

Leaving Bengal, Conti travelled overland through Arakan to Burma and the Irrawaddi, and the Burmese capital of Ava. He describes in this country the method of capturing and taming elephants; the enormous pythons "as thick as a man and six cubits (10 feet) long", which the natives roasted and ate with gusto. He also saw the one-horned rhinoceros of Assam and Northern Burma. From the town of Ava he may have travelled into Siam, but although he gives a vague description of China and Eastern Tibet (including the Yak<sup>1</sup> tails used by grandees), it is certain he did not go there himself. On the other hand, he did visit the Malay Peninsula, Java, and perhaps other Malay islands, and Cochin China. In Java he noticed the beautifully coloured lory parrots, the white cockatoos, and the bird-of-paradise skins; all of which he quite rightly states were obtained from the Spice Islands (Moluccas, &c.) farther east. They were brought to Java by Malay traders. It is unlikely that Conti himself went much beyond Java.

In the Malay Peninsula or Southern Siam he observed and first described to European ears the flying lizards

<sup>1</sup> He would lead us to infer that the domestic yak ox of Tibet extended into Yunnan, north of Burma.

(*Draco volans*), the Colugo<sup>1</sup> or "flying lemur" (which he thought was a flying cat), the huge Jack fruit (*Artocarpus integrifolia*)—an ally of the bread fruit of the Pacific Islands farther to the east—and the mango (which he calls by its common Indian name, *amba*). This portion of the narrative (all of which was dictated in various conversations with Poggio Bracciolini, Secretary to Pope Eugenius IV, written by the latter in Latin, and embodied in the fourth volume of a ponderous treatise on the *Varieties of Fortune!*) is rather vague, but we may surmise that Conti crossed the Bay of Bengal by sea and so returned to Southern India. From Calicut he voyaged across the Indian Ocean to the Island of Sokotra, then to Aden, Berbera (Somaliland), Jidda, and the Gulf of Suez. In Egypt his wife and two of his children died of the plague. With the other two children he reached Rome safely, somewhere about the year 1444.

At the close of the fifteenth century (1494-9) a Genoese, Geronimo de Santo Stefano, proceeded to India by way of the Red Sea, and travelled as far as Sumatra. He followed much the same route as Nicolò dei Conti, and repeated a good many of his observations. Indeed these old travellers did not hesitate to borrow a good deal of their travel notes from their predecessors' books or manuscripts, or else they met with adventures that were surprisingly similar. On his return journey from Ceylon to Cambay he was shipwrecked near the Maldiv Islands and floated, clinging to a plank, for twenty-four hours before an Arab ship picked him up. Through the kindness of a

<sup>1</sup> *Galeopithecus* is a creature about the size of a cat with a great development of loose skin between the arms, sides, legs, and tail. With this parachute-like arrangement it can sail downwards at an angle from tree to tree, with sometimes an upward turn or swoop; but it cannot flap the membrane and fly like a bat. It seems to be allied to the ancient Insectivorous stem from which arose both bats and lemurs.







Damascus merchant he made his way back to the coast of Syria.

The Tatars (who in this case were mainly Turks in racial origin) held much of Central and Southern Russia under their sway for two hundred years after the first Mongol raids; but by 1462 the Russians had completely regained their independence, and had driven most of the Tatars into the Crimean peninsula and the Ural Mountains. Then the two races fused to some extent and developed common interests in trade. This led to Christian Russians finding their way after the middle of the fifteenth century to many parts of Central Asia. A noteworthy Russian traveller, Athanasius Nikitin, in 1468 reached the shores of the Caspian by boating down the Volga River, and thence travelled to Persia and the Persian Gulf, whence he took ship to Gujarat. He eventually penetrated, in 1474, as far as Golkonda, the diamond country of Central India.

The Portuguese, who were to play such a great part in the opening up of India, were first attracted towards this region by a desire to share in the spice trade, which for some centuries had become almost the monopoly of the Republic of Venice. Venice obtained the spice and pepper, which she sent through her merchants all over Europe, from Southern India. Arab ships and caravans brought the spice and the pepper to the Red Sea and Egypt, or to the Persian Gulf and the Syrian coast, and the Venetian ships did the rest. Some Indian products also found their way via the Persian Gulf and Persia to the shores of the Black Sea, whence they were conveyed to Europe by the Genoese; but after the end of the fourteenth century this commerce was greatly interrupted,

partly by the Venetian superiority in sea power over the Genoese, and partly by the confusion caused through the invasion of Asia Minor by the Muhammadan Turks and Tatars, who in one way and another almost arrested the overland commerce between Persia and Europe for nearly two hundred years.

Impelled by a desire to obtain the products of Africa—gold, ivory, precious stones, spice, and pepper—without the intervention of the Venetians or Moors, the Portuguese first of all found their way along the West African coast to the equatorial regions, and then passed beyond the Cape of Good Hope in 1486-7-8. This promontory seemed to be the terminal point of Africa, and beyond it, to the east, must lie the ocean which washed the shores of Ethiopia and India. But before knowing that his sea captains had actually rounded the southernmost promontory of Africa, it occurred to the Portuguese king, João (John) II, that it would be wise to ascertain something definite about the trade and political condition of India, and the opinion of Arab seamen on the East African coast as to the circumnavigability of Africa, also the whereabouts of that mysterious Christian king—Prester John—reported by the Moors to exist in Ethiopia. Such a monarch might prove a valuable ally to the Portuguese on the eastern side of Africa. Consequently, after one or two previous messengers had failed to get beyond Syria, through their failure to speak Arabic, the King of Portugal (João II) dispatched two envoys much better equipped for the purpose—Affonso de Paiva and PERO DE COVILHAM. The last-named had already been employed on a diplomatic mission to the Berber king of Tlemsan in Western Algeria, and could speak Arabic well. These envoys reached Egypt by way of Naples and the Island

of Rhodes, perhaps in a Venetian ship, their nationality and their purpose being disguised, but they being in some ways under the protection of the Medici family of Florence. At Aden they separated, Paiva to seek out Abyssinia (he was afterwards killed at Suakin) and Covilham to proceed in an Arab ship to Kannanor on the west coast of India, from which point he visited Calicut and Goa. Calicut was then ruled by a Hindu raja or "Zamorin", a viceroy of the powerful Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagar (see p. 70).

After a brief examination of the commercial possibilities of the Malabar coast, Covilham took ship and sailed west across the Indian Ocean (no doubt by way of Zanzibar) to Sofala, the Arab colony near the site of the modern Beira, the port of Rhodesia in South-east Africa. At this place he satisfied himself that the circumnavigation of the southern extremity of Africa was quite possible, and also that a very large island (Madagascar), called the Island of the Moon, lay almost on the route between South-east Africa and India. On returning to Egypt and finding there two messengers from the king of Portugal (the Jews, Abraham of Beja and Josef of Lamego, two widely travelled Portuguese subjects who did much to forward Portuguese interests in the East)—he sent back by Josef of Lamego this information to his king. His own return to Lisbon was postponed till he could visit Hormuz with the experienced Rabbi Abraham. This he did, and afterwards sent off Abraham of Beja, to the King of Portugal, with a description of the trade and politics of the Persian Gulf. Finally, Covilham started from Aden for the opposite coast of north Somaliland. Here he soon got into touch with the Emperor of Ethiopia, who took him to Shoa, and, finding he was of great use

as an adviser, politely but firmly declined to let him go. Pero de Covilham passed thirty-three years of his life in Abyssinia, married an Abyssinian wife, and left numerous children and a large fortune. He lived to see the arrival of a Portuguese embassy to Abyssinia under Rodriguez de Lima in 1525. Apparently he then obtained leave to return to his native land, but died on the way home.

## CHAPTER III

### A Journey to India at the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century

Before describing the arrival by sea, round the Cape of Good Hope, of the Portuguese sea captains and the manner in which they took possession of the principal trading ports of India and Further India (thus ousting the Arabs from their commercial supremacy, and paving the way for the subjection of all Southern Asia by the European Christian Powers), let us obtain some idea of the condition and aspect of these regions at the opening of that remarkable sixteenth century which was to witness such social and religious changes in Europe, and such a marvellous development of the white man's science and his knowledge of geography. To do so we must once more rely on an Italian traveller, Ludovico di Varthema, who after his return to Rome in 1508 obtained permission from Pope Julius II for the publication, with ten years' sole copyright, of a full account of his adventures and his discoveries as to Asiatic geography.

LUDOVICO DI VARTHEMA was born in Bologna, a town of Papal Italy, about 1478(?). It would seem from his name as though—like so many notable citizens of Italy since the close of the Roman Empire—he was of German descent. Di Varthema is possibly a corruption of von Wartheim.<sup>1</sup> When about twenty-four years of age (we

<sup>1</sup> The Latin version of his name, however, was given as *Vartomanus*, which would make "Wartmann" a more likely form for the German original.

may guess) he was seized with a great desire to travel, especially in out-of-the-way regions. He made his way to some port on the Adriatic Sea—possibly Venice—and sailed thence to Alexandria in Egypt, where he arrived early in 1503. From Alexandria he travelled to Cairo, and thence into Syria. Egypt and Syria at this period formed one dominion under the government of the Mamluk Sultans of Egypt.<sup>1</sup> Varthema spent some time in Damascus, fascinated with the magnificence and beauty of the city, and also applying himself to learning Arabic, so that he might, if need be, pass as a Muhammadan on his travels. Being very desirous of visiting Mekka, the sacred city of the Muhammadans, he cultivated the friendship of a captain of the Mamluk guard of the pilgrim caravan, which was to start from Damascus in April to journey to Medina and Mekka. But, in addition, Varthema was obliged to declare he had become a convert to Islam and to utter publicly the profession of Muhammadan faith: “There is no God but *the* God, and Muhammad is his apostle”. He also took the name of Yunas or Jonah.

While staying in Mekka, of which city he gave an admirable description—the first written by any Christian

<sup>1</sup> In the tenth century A.D. a revolution in the Muhammadan world led to North Africa, Egypt, and later on Syria, becoming detached from the Caliphate at Baghdad, which was held by princes of the house of Abbas. A supposed descendant of Fatima, a daughter of the prophet Muhammad, became an independent Caliph in Egypt, and under his dynasty Cairo was founded and became the capital. After some time this Fatimite dynasty in turn became enfeebled and power fell into the hands of successful soldiers or generals, such as Saladin, and latterly such as were elected by the Mamluks or Slave soldiers. The origin of these Mamluks was a bodyguard established by the Caliphs of Cairo or Baghdad, who had purchased or captured slaves from all parts of the Mediterranean Basin, from Syria, Persia, and, above all, from amongst the Turks, Circassians, and other warlike races of Western Asia. The boy slaves were brought up to the profession of arms. All the power at last fell into the hands of this body of regular troops, who elected and maintained the various dynasties of sultans who reigned over Egypt and Syria between 1254 and the Turkish conquest in 1517, though all the time a nominal caliph continued to exist under their protection, a caliph who finally ceded his powers to the Sultan of Turkey.

traveller—he was recognized as an Italian by an Arab merchant who had traded much with Italy, and who could speak Italian. To this man he confided his great desire to travel to India and see the land from which came spices and jewels. His friend the merchant warned him that there had been a great interruption in the trade between India and Arabia owing to the victories at sea of the Portuguese and their captures of Arab ships. But Varthema professed to be able to make large stone mortars or cannon, and declared that if he could only reach India he would teach the Muhammadans to make such guns as would effectually assist them to get the better of the Portuguese. The Arab merchant therefore concealed Varthema in his house, where his wife and his niece conceived a sentimental fancy for the handsome young Italian Mamluk, and between husband and wife he was smuggled away out of the city, and reached its port—Jidda—on the Red Sea. When Varthema reached Jidda, where the people were very fanatical, he hid himself in a dark corner of a mosque for fourteen days, the mosques in this and other Muhammadan places being much frequented by travellers or poor people on pilgrimages, who for various reasons could not afford to go to an inn. At nighttime Varthema would steal out of the mosque and buy food.

At the end of this fortnight he succeeded in arranging with the master of an Arab sailing ship to give him a passage to the Persian Gulf. They coasted along the shores of Tropical Arabia—the Arabia Felix of Roman geographers, a country of high mountains and fairly abundant rainfall. In this region, known as Yaman, Varthema found very good grapes and peaches, quinces, pomegranates, onions, garlic, excellent nuts, melons, roses, nec-



and chaff with him, but sent him out good and sound food to eat. "A sheep was passing through the King's court, the tail of which weighed forty pounds.<sup>1</sup> I seized it and demanded of it if it was a Muhammadan, a Christian, or a Jew . . ." Varthema in his writings then goes on to relate how he called on the sheep to pronounce the Muhammadan profession of faith, and, as it remained silent, how he killed it (somewhat cruelly) with a stick. "The Queen stood there laughing, and afterwards fed me for three days on the flesh of it, than which I do not know that I ever ate better."

Later on he killed an unfortunate donkey carrying water to the palace, because the ass would not pronounce himself a Muhammadan. Becoming bolder, he cudgelled a Jew to such an extent that he left him for dead, but, meeting one of his Muhammadan guardians, the latter called him a Christian dog and son of a dog, and threw stones, which caused the Italian to suffer severe pain and injury, so that he returned to his prison. Here he blocked himself up in the cell with large stones, and remained for two days and nights without eating or drinking. The Sultana, who took a tender interest in him, caused his cell to be broken into, and his gaolers brought him pieces of marble, declaring it was sugar, and grapes filled with earth. To keep up his character of madman, Ludovico declares that he ate both grapes and marble and everything else that they brought him. At last, to please the princess, he was removed from prison, and put into a lower chamber in her palace. Finally, the Arab lady, who from the somewhat vague description given may have been a widow or a woman in an independent position,

<sup>1</sup> The sheep of Southern Arabia and East Africa are hairy, not woolly, and belong to the fat-tailed breed.

proposed marriage to him. But although this would have brought him wealth and a measure of liberty, he steadfastly refused, fearing lest it should mean his perpetual residence in a country from which he was longing to escape. Finally he persuaded her to obtain his liberty, and even to let him visit a holy man near Aden, who might perform the miracle of restoring him to complete health. Accordingly he was sent to Aden on a camel, and given twenty-five pieces of gold. Once he had reached that city he made arrangements for departing in the merchant fleet for India, which should sail in a month's time, and spent the interval travelling about South-west Arabia. At one place in the mountains of Yaman he came across a troop of "ten thousand" baboons, the old males of which had immense manes of hair about the shoulders, which made them look like lions. On account of these baboons, and their hostility to man, it was not possible to pass along this mountain track except in companies of at least a hundred persons, and Varthema and the companions with whom he travelled were obliged to kill a number of these big monkeys with bows, slings, and dogs before they could get through.

At last, after hiding for a time in the mosque at Aden, he managed to pass secretly on board the ship on which he had secured his passage. But owing to the unfavourable winds, instead of pursuing a direct course for India or the Persian Gulf, they were obliged to cross over to Somaliland and anchor at Zeila, then the principal seaport of Northern Somaliland and of the kingdoms of Harrar and Abyssinia. Here he noticed another kind of sheep, of the now well-known Somali breed; the head and neck were quite black, but the rest of the body snowy white. The tail was broad and fat, but the lower part of it slender

and twisted, or curled like the tail of a pig. These sheep had large dewlaps, almost touching the ground as they walked.

From Zeila they made their way to Berbera, the modern capital of British Somaliland, and at last got a fair wind, which carried them right across the Indian Ocean to the Island of Diu, off the southern extremity of Gujarat. Diu is separated from the mainland by a narrow channel only navigable by small boats. It had evidently long been a place of resort for foreign merchants from the west, for in Varthema's time it was called "Diu, the port of Rumi".<sup>1</sup> [It was captured by the Portuguese in 1515, about eleven years after Varthema's visit, and is actually a Portuguese possession at the present day, though no longer of any importance as a trading port.] After visiting the Gulf of Cambay, Varthema's ship sailed across to the Persian Gulf and to the town of Maskat, the capital of the independent Arab principality of Oman, and from here they made their way to the far-famed island and city of Hormuz, which has played such an important part in the earlier trade with the East.

This island, Hormuz or Ormuz, must have been of importance as a place of call for ships trading to and from India a thousand years before the time of Christ. It became known to the Greek admirals of Alexander's expedition under the general name of Harmozia, which included also the mainland coast. Hormuz is only five miles distant from the opposite mainland of Persia, and has an area of about 16 square miles. It was first visited by Englishmen (so far as we know) in 1583, when Ralph

<sup>1</sup> Rumi = Roman. It was a term applied by the Arabs to the people of the Roman Empire, Western and Eastern, and latterly to the Byzantine Greeks, and finally to the Turks who succeeded the Greeks as rulers of the Eastern Roman Empire.

Fitch (afterwards to be described) and his three companions stayed at Hormuz. Fitch afterwards wrote that it was the driest island in the world, producing nothing but sulphur and rock salt.<sup>1</sup> The salt, however, was exported as a valuable product, being white and of good flavour. The seaport town of Hormuz was the resort of merchants of all nations, Muhammadans, Christians, Hindus, and Fire-worshippers. It was the depot of a great trade in all sorts of spices, drugs, silk, Persian tapestry and carpets, pearls from the Persian Gulf and from Ceylon, horses from Persia and Arabia, and many other things. It was captured by the Portuguese four years after Varthema's arrival, and was then endowed by its European conquerors with reservoirs for holding rain-water, a lighthouse, and strong fortifications. Even as an Arab city it is described by Varthema as "noble and extremely beautiful", and situated within three days' sea journey of pearl fisheries, whence were obtained the largest pearls found in the world. These pearls were fished for (wrote Varthema) in the following manner:—

"There are certain fishers with some little boats, who throw out a large stone attached to a thick rope, one from the stern and one from the prow, in order that the said boats may remain firm; they then throw down another rope, also with a stone, to the bottom. In the middle of the boat is one of these fishers, who hangs a couple of bags round his neck, and ties a large stone to his feet, and goes fifteen paces under water, and remains there as long as he is able, in order to find the oysters, in which are pearls. As he finds them he puts them into the bags, and then leaves the stone which he had at his feet, and comes up by one of the said ropes."—From the translation of the *Travels of Ludovico di Varthema* by Dr. Percy Badger, Hakluyt Society.

From Hormuz, Varthema crossed on to the mainland

<sup>1</sup> It now exports annually many tons of red ochre (clay stained with iron) which goes to England to be made up into artists' colours. From this is made Indian Red. See for further description in sixteenth century, pp. 129-131.

of Persia, and travelling northwards reached Herat, which was then the capital of Khorassan, the northernmost province of Persia and a great corn-bearing region. The ruler of this region at that time was a descendant of Timur, the Tatar conqueror. In those days Khorassan was peaceful and prosperous, and Herat was a great centre of the silk trade, so that, according to Varthema, in one day you could purchase three thousand or four thousand camel loads of silk, manufactured locally from the cocoons of the silkworms which fed on the mulberry trees of the Herat orchards. Several kinds of corn, including wheat and durra, grew in this neighbourhood. Cotton was abundantly cultivated and manufactured into many kinds of fine muslins and calicoes. The opium poppy was also grown in this district, as were great quantities of rhubarb, which was cultivated for its medicinal properties, not to be eaten as a fruit. It was very often used for purging cattle. Herat in those days was far more important than it is now. Under the strong Tatar rule it had become a depot and an exchange for the commerce of China (by way of Thibet), of Kashmir, Turkestan, India, Afghanistan, and Persia. From Herat Varthema made his way across Persia to Shiraz.

At Shiraz, Varthema was much impressed with the abundance of jewels for sale: the beautiful rubies from Balass or Badakhshan, the lapis lazuli from the same region, and the turquoises from Khorassan.<sup>1</sup>

In Shiraz also musk was collected from Afghanistan, Tibet, and Central Asia, and was passed on by the Persian merchants to Turkey and Europe. [This strong-smelling perfume is the secretion of a gland in the musk-

<sup>1</sup> The lapis lazuli he calls "ultramarine". It was indeed from this mineral that this lovely blue colour was ground for the palettes of the old painters.



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THE MEETING NEAR SHIRAZ OF VARTHEMA AND KHOJA ZIANOR



deer, a curious ruminant found in Central Asia. It has no antlers like the deer, to which it is allied in general structure, but the male possesses long canine tusks in the upper jaw. The legs are long but the hoofs are almost clawlike, and can be widely separated one from the other, so that the creature is able to find a footing on rocks which scarcely any other beast could stand on.] According to Varthema, this dried secretion when perfectly pure was so strong smelling that it caused blood to flow from the nose, but it was much adulterated before it reached the European perfume-makers. Another Italian traveller, writing a few years later, stated that the grains of musk brought to Europe were merely little pieces of dried goats' flesh steeped in the real musk. Even at the present day both the musk from this mountain deer of Central Asia and the civet from the catlike carnivore of Africa and India form the basis of many scents and perfumes much valued in Europe and America.

At Shiraz, Varthema encountered a Persian merchant of Herat, who had been on a pilgrimage two years before at Mekka and had there made his acquaintance. He calls him Cazazionor or Cogiazianor, which—according to the late Dr. George Badger, who edited the English edition of Varthema's travels—is a corruption of a title (Khawaja or Khoja) and a name, and would probably mean "Mr. Zianor". Zianor recognized Varthema at once as "Yunas the Mamluk", and asked what he was doing at Shiraz. Varthema replied that he was exploring the world.

Zianor answered: "God be praised! For I shall have a companion who will explore the world with me;" and further told him that he was a wealthy man who travelled not so much to make money, but because he too wanted to see strange countries. Together they set out in the



direction of Herat, to visit Zianor's home, for he had conceived such esteem for the Mamluk Yunas that he desired to give him in marriage his beautiful niece, who was called Shams, or "the Sun". "Truly she had a name which suited her, for she was extremely beautiful." But the mind of Varthema "was intent on other things", and he evaded this match, probably by suggesting that he should get his travels over first and then settle down afterwards. He must have been a very attractive individual, for this was practically the third time on this Eastern journey that he had evaded marriage with a lady of the country.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> According to a story he afterwards told his companions in Burma he was already married in Italy and the father of children. It is difficult to know what was really true about his private history. This last story seems to have been made up for the occasion.

## CHAPTER IV

### Hindu India in 1505, as seen by Varthema

In the company of his Persian friend, Khawaja Zianor, Varthema returned to Hormuz and embarked on a ship for India. They called first at a place in the delta of the great Indus River, and from there passed round the peninsula of Gujarat up the Gulf of Cambay, and so reached that city of Combeia (Cambay, known to the natives as Kumbayut), which was the resort of so many foreign merchants for centuries before Surat and Bombay became the principal ports of Western India. Gujarat is a very interesting part of India. It marks the beginning on the north-west of the ancient island continent which was separated by a branch of the sea (now the valleys of the Indus and Ganges, and the Desert of Rajputana) from the great mountains and plateaus of Central Asia, though Gujarat and its southern peninsula of Kathiawar may have been a large island connected with the Dekkan mainland. On the north there is still a vestige of the ancient sea of Rajputana in the curious swamp region called the Rann of Kachh. It is the last haunt of the lion in India.

This region also sheltered in Varthema's time numerous settlements of the pious Jain people, who still professed a form of Buddhism at a time when that religion was nearly extinct in India. These Jains of the Girnar district, and also round about Cambay itself, held the Buddhist belief that it was very wrong to kill anything

that had life. In Varthema's opinion they were such good people that "if they were baptized they would all be saved by virtue of their works, for they would not do to others that they would not others should do to them". Their excessive goodness of heart even prevented their defending their country from the attacks of the Muhammadans. So that this region at the time of Varthema's visit had been to a great extent conquered by a Muhammadan sultan named Mahmud.<sup>1</sup> These Jains of Kathiawar and Cambay maintained hospitals for beasts, birds, and reptiles, especially those that were injured or sick, and curious domed structures in which weevil beetles and other insects were kept and duly maintained with suitable food. When in going through their repositories of grain these Jains found weevils or any other kind of beetle, instead of killing them they removed them to the domed insect-houses, in which places were also kept ants who were fed on meat.

Cambay was a great market for those spices and perfumes which made India so attractive in earlier centuries when people liked strong tastes in their cookery and strong odours on their persons and in their homes. It was also famous for its agates, cornelians, and onyxes, found in the mountains to the south-east near the banks of the Narbadda; and Varthema heard of diamonds at a distance of nine days' journey from Cambaya.

The native ruler of this region of Kathiawar and Cambaya at the time of Varthema's visit was the Muhammadan Sultan, Mahmud Bigarrah, already mentioned, of whom an extraordinary description is given by this Italian traveller. Besides his moustaches tied over his head he had

<sup>1</sup> Nicknamed Bigarrah, because he wore enormous moustaches, large and twisted like the crumpled horns of an ox (bigarrah). These moustaches were so long that they were tied over his head.

a white beard reaching to his girdle. He was said to have been brought up from childhood habituated to consume poison or poisonous drugs, beginning by small doses and gradually increasing them till he could take a large quantity without feeling ill. He was put through this course (according to tradition) by his father, in the hope that he might never thus lose his life by treacherous attendants or enemies, who might seek to put poison into his food. It was said that his blood became so venomous that if a fly alighted on his hand it swelled up and died at once. According to Varthema, he would fill his mouth with venomous juice by chewing poisonous fruits and leaves mixed with the lime of oyster shells. When he had masticated these things well, and had his mouth full, he would spurt it out upon that person whom he wished to kill, so that in the space of half an hour such a person would fall to the ground dead. His very garments were thrown away by himself when he required to change them, and not washed like other people's clothes, for fear of their infection. But there was probably very little truth in these stories, and the Arab historians of the period only record the fact that he was an enormous eater. Otherwise they have celebrated him as the best of all the Gujarat kings, on account of his justice and beneficence, his strength, bravery, and liberality.

Of the Hindu people as yet unconquered by the Muhammadans to the east of Cambay, Varthema wrote that their chief led the life of a saint (Yogi), and was accustomed to go every three or four years on a pilgrimage, together with three or four thousand of his people, who were likewise considered saints. He would be accompanied, however, by his wife and children, four or five riding horses, tame monkeys, parrots, civet cats, chitas, and falcons.

The chief and his principal men powdered the face, arms, and all the body with ground-up sandalwood, so that they imparted a very pleasant smell. As an act of devotion they never sat on high seats, but usually on the ground. Some adopted the custom of never lying at full length, merely because to do so was comfortable, while others remained under a vow of silence, never speaking to anyone. They wore usually a horn or trumpet round their necks, and sounded this on entering a city, so as to intimate that they wished for alms. Some of them were armed with a stick fitted with a ring of iron at the base. Others carried "certain iron dishes" with sharp edges which cut like razors, and these they threw at their enemies with a sling, and often with deadly effect. Therefore, when these bands of truculent, well-armed pilgrims appeared at any city in Southern India, everyone tried to propitiate them, for, being saints, even if they killed the first nobleman of the land, they might not be punished.

The next place visited by Varthema was Chaul, about 23 miles south of Bombay, in the district of Kolaba. Then calling at one or two towns by the way he reached Goa, not as yet captured by the Portuguese, though it was afterwards to be, and to remain their principal Indian possession. [Old Goa, now called Marmagao, seems then to have been an island. It is still a long peninsula.] From Goa he made his way beyond the Ghats or steep mountain range of Western India, across the tableland of the Dekkan to Bijapur, then the capital of the Muhammadan kingdom of the Dekkan. The king of that great Indian principality at the time of Varthema's visit was Yusuf Khan, believed to be of Turkish descent and the unacknowledged son of the Sultan Murad II. He had been purchased as a slave for the bodyguard of an Indian prince. By degrees he

was raised to the highest position in the state, and finally became an independent sovereign, calling himself Adil Shah. He constructed the fortress of Bijapur, and made this place his capital, raising there a palace of great size and magnificence, so that in the opinion of travellers down to the middle of the nineteenth century (some time after it had fallen into ruin) it was more magnificent than any ancient or modern European palace they had ever beheld, both in spaciousness and style of architecture. The bastioned wall which enclosed it was about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles round, and the area of the palace and its gardens was some 62 acres. It was further surrounded by large trees.

Here Adil Shah lived in great pride and pomp. According to Varthema, one had to pass through forty-four chambers before arriving at the king's audience hall; and there might be seen his servants and attendants, heavily jewelled, wearing rubies and diamonds on the insteps of their shoes, and similar gems on the fingers and in the ears. Their dress consisted of robes or shirts of silk, but, unlike most of the Indians seen hitherto by Varthema, they wore full Turkish breeches and shoes or boots, while the women went about with their faces covered "after the custom of Damascus". Adil Shah maintained many foreign soldiers in his service, not only Abyssinian negroes and negroids, but even white men—probably Kurds, Turks, and Persians. Only three miles distant from the city of Bijapur was a mountain, where the king mined for diamonds. This mountain he surrounded by a wall, and guarded it with soldiers.

Visiting various islands and ports along the coast of Kanara, and noting the abundance of domestic buffaloes, oxen, sheep, and goats, and the absence of horses, mules, and asses; the quantities of rice eaten by the people; the

numbers of peacocks, parrots, wild boars, deer, wolves, and lions, of roses and other flowers, and fruits; Varthema arrived at Kannanor, "a fine and large city in which the kingdom of Portugal has a very strong castle". [But as a matter of fact, although the Portuguese did build this castle or fort, in 1507, it was not in existence at the time of Varthema's visit, though Kannanor was frequented by the Portuguese after January, 1507.] Kannanor in those days was a port which kept up a great trade with the Persian Gulf, in horses, and there were many Arab merchants in the town. No grain grew in this region, but there were quantities of cucumbers and melons, coconuts, rice, pepper, ginger, cardamoms, and other spices, besides the mango fruit, to which Varthema refers obscurely. As beasts of burden and of draught, elephants had taken the place of the horses, mules, camels, or asses used in the regions farther north.

Varthema next journeyed northwards to the once-splendid capital of Vijayanagar<sup>1</sup> (miscalled Narsinga), on the western bank of the Tungabudra, an affluent of the great Kistna River. This was the capital of the ancient Hindu kingdom of the Karnatik, which before the invasion of the Muhammadans had been the one great state of Southern India. According to Varthema, it occupied a most beautiful site on the side of a mountain, and had a triple circle of walls. It contained immense parks for hunting and fowling, and appeared to him to be a second Paradise, with the best air, great fertility, wealth of merchandise, and abundance of all possible delicacies.

The king of this region was a Hindu, "that is to say, an idolater", but he was very powerful and maintained a

<sup>1</sup> Sometimes written Bijayanagar. This great Hindu state covered all Maisur (Mysore) and much of the present Madras presidency.

cavalry force of forty thousand men, all of whose horses had to be imported from the Persian Gulf. This king also possessed four hundred elephants and a few swift camels. The elephants when going to war were saddled, and on each side of the saddle was fastened a strong wooden box carrying three men. These six warriors were armed with coats of mail, bows and lances, swords and shields, and the elephant himself, more especially his head and trunk, were defended by mail armour. On his trunk they fastened a kind of scythe 3 or 4 feet long and about 4 inches wide. With these scythes they struck at the king's enemies in battle, and were so well disciplined that they would slay wherever directed and refrain when ordered to stop killing. Only, unfortunately, they were given to sudden panics (though Varthema does not note this), and their scythes then proved disastrous to their own side in the battle.

Everywhere in this kingdom one might travel in safety, and Christians were warmly welcomed, for in those days they were not associated with any acts of rapine or oppression, and the king of this great Hindu state of Vijayanagar hoped to find in the Portuguese useful allies against the invading Muhammadans. Only in one particular were the roads unsafe: the attacks of "lions", by which Varthema probably means tigers, though the lion still existed in this region for some two hundred years longer.

Varthema returned southwards to the Malabar coast, and continued his journey till he reached Calicut (Kalikat), "a very noble city", which at that time was the principal objective of the fleets of the Portuguese, only recently arrived in the Indian Ocean. Calicut had become known to European trade and ideas of geography a century or more before the arrival of the Portuguese, partly through



the travels of Nicolò dei Conti, who describes it as "a city 8 miles in circumference, a noble emporium for all India, abounding in pepper, lac, ginger, cinnamon, myrobalans and zedoari".<sup>1</sup> It is also mentioned by the Russian traveller Nikitin, though it is doubtful whether he went there himself. Hither also came Pero de Covilham in 1487. Yet though described at that time as being one of the greatest ports in the district of Malabar, and a secure harbour, it seems to have been in the time of Varthema's visit built on the open beach, without either river or haven, and ships were obliged to anchor in the open roadstead, because the original harbour had filled up with drifted sand. About a mile to the south there was a river with a narrow mouth, which stream flowed through a part of the town and had many branches or canals. The flat ground whereon the widely scattered city stood was undermined with water, and it was only necessary to dig wells 4 or 5 feet deep to come to water; consequently it was impossible to build heavy or tall houses, and the dwellings therefore were one-storied, only about 20 feet high, and a good proportion of them roofed with leaves or thatch. Indeed, it would seem probable that much of the original town of Calicut as seen by Varthema and the early Portuguese is now under the sea, its foundations having been sapped by the water.

The ruler of this place in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was known as Samori or Zamorin, a word of uncertain origin, but indicating a Hindu dynasty of some power which had hitherto resisted the advance of the

<sup>1</sup> *Lac*, so often referred to in lists of Indian trade products of this period, was the resinous substance and dye secreted by a scale insect (*Carteria*) from the leaves and twigs of fig trees. It was used in making sealing wax, varnishes, and a beautiful crimson dye. "Zedoari" was the Arabic *Zadwar*, a bitter, aromatic, stimulating drug made from the root of a species of gourd (*Curcuma*).

Muhammadans; and acknowledged the suzerainty of the Hindu Empire of Vijayanagar. Out of hostility to Moslem influence the Samori of Calicut at first received the Portuguese well, but a quarrel subsequently arose, due to the murder at Calicut of a Portuguese agent by the jealous Muhammadan merchants. And, consequently, the Portuguese, although they never succeeded in conquering and occupying Calicut, bombarded the place and supported against the overlordship of its Samori the lesser Raja of Cochin.

The people of this part of Malabar lay outside the range of the Aryan languages of India, which on the west coast of that peninsula reaches as far south as a point 200 miles beyond Goa. They spoke a Dravidian language known as Malayalam (a dialect of Tamul), but otherwise they were quite Hinduized and completely under the influence of the Brahmins of Aryan descent. Consequently they endured the thralldom of "caste", like so much of Hindu-India during the last two thousand years. In Calicut Varthema describes the six classes or castes into which the people were divided.<sup>1</sup> The first were the

<sup>1</sup> The following notes on caste may be of use at this stage. Caste was mainly the invention of the Aryan invaders of India between, let us say, three thousand and one thousand years ago. It was established gradually to keep the invading white Aryans as a superior race apart from the dark-skinned aboriginal natives. Amongst these Aryans three castes were and are recognized. (1) the Brahman or priest; (2) the Kshatriya or warrior class; and (3) the Vaisya or Vis, who were the husbandmen, farmers, or peasants. All these three castes, though the first and second ranked far higher than the third, were considered "twice born", because the boys on their approach to manhood went through an initiation into the mysteries of religion, and at the same time received the triple threads twisted into a cord to be worn for the rest of their lives round the neck. This triple thread was of cotton for the Brahmins, of hemp for the warriors, and of wool for the Vaisya. The Vaisya are sometimes known as the Jats in the north of India; but many of them have elsewhere in India long given up any connection with agriculture and constitute the great middle class of merchants, bankers, "baniyas", or men of business. The Kshatriya or soldier caste is practically identical with the Rajputs of North Central India, and the Naïrs of the south. Outside the three "twice-born" castes, the whole of the mass of the Indian peoples were classed as Sudras or

*Brahmans*, the descendants (with, of course, some intermixture of Indian blood) of the ancient Aryan invaders who used Sanskrit as their sacred language. These Brahmans or *Namburi* were treated as though they were demigods: they could do no wrong and could act as they pleased, and (according to the writings of later travellers) seem to have been subdivided into three groups—the Namburi, first, as ministers of state and religion; the Brahmans, who were more especially the priests of the temples; and the Bûts, who were magicians or astrologers. The second highest caste were the *Nairs* or landed gentry, the descendants, no doubt, of ancient conquerors of the country. [These two castes would have constituted the “twice born” mentioned in the note; the Vaisya or cultivator class of Aryan origin only reaching Southern India as merchants.] The third caste were the *Tiva* or *Teivi*, who supervised the large plantations of coconuts along the coast and who were also superior artisans. The fourth caste were the *Makwa* or fishermen; the fifth, the *Pulia*, who collected pepper and nuts and the sap of the palm trees (for wine). The sixth caste were the *Hirava*, agricultural peasants, who cultivated rice. There may have been also a seventh or lowest caste of all, the *Niadi* or *Pulichhi*, who were probably the descendants of the negroid forest savages. These dwelt in woods and marshes, and subsisted almost entirely on hunting, and did not till the ground. As to the people of the third, fifth, and sixth castes (*Tiva*, *Pulia*, and *Hirava*)—to say nothing of the *Pulichhi*—they were regarded as so vile and low in the scale of humanity that they might not approach the Brahmans

“once born” and were never granted the sacred thread. These Sudras, again, were divided up into a great variety of minor castes or divisions, some honourable, others vile, despicable.

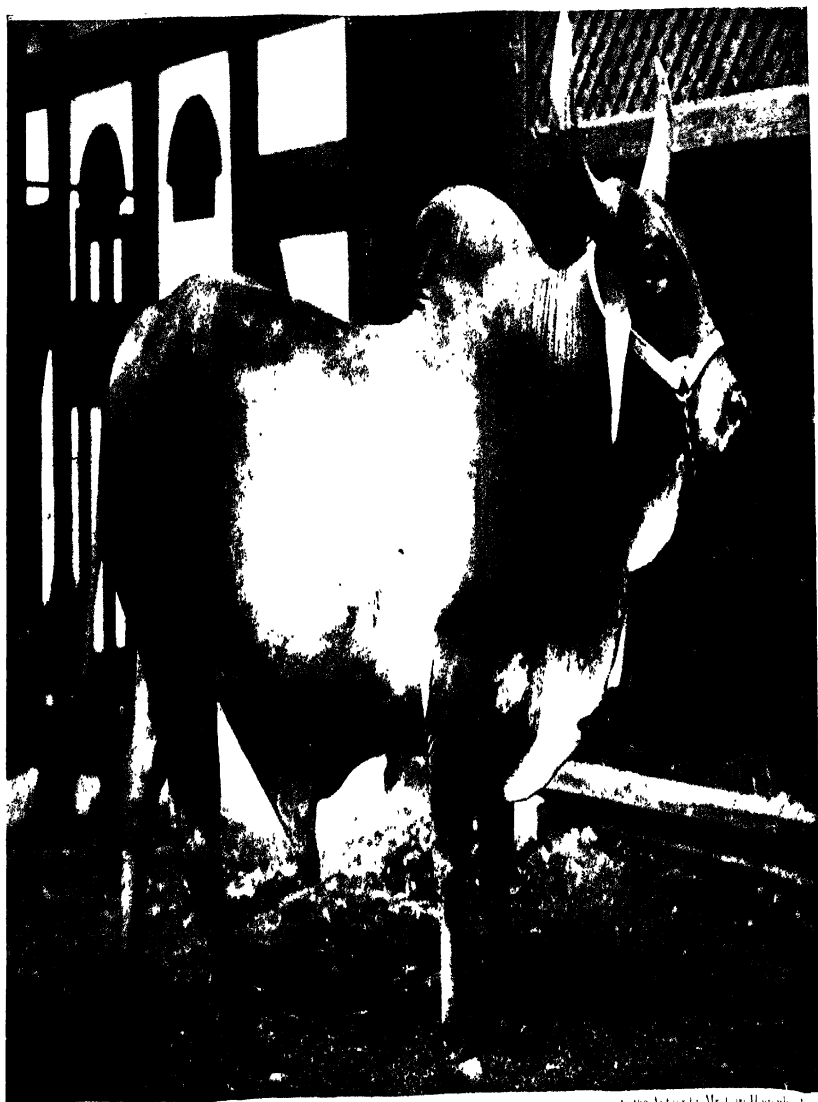
or the Nair (landed gentry) within fifty paces, unless specially called; and to avoid giving offence they endeavoured to use not the main roads but bypaths, crying and singing in a loud voice as they passed along these tracks through marsh, bush, and forest, so as to warn any Nair or Brahman of their approach. "Should they not be crying out and any Nair be going that way and see their fruits or meet any of them, these Nairs may kill them without incurring any punishment." None of the Brahmans could without losing caste taste animal food; but the Nair or gentry were permitted to eat venison, goats' flesh, fowls, and fish. Many of the practices indulged in by the Brahmans and Nairs would be considered by us very vicious and immoral, but the extraordinary reverence felt for these representatives of a superior race by the black peasantry of the country was such that they never thought of questioning the behaviour of the priests or the aristocracy, and are scarcely doing so now, though of late Christianity has spread a good deal amongst the lower classes and is raising them materially in social life.

In Varthema's day, from the king and queen down to the peasants, the people put on very little clothing, owing to the great heat of the climate—just a swathing of cotton or silk round their waists, and nothing on their heads or feet. The women wore their glossy, black hair long, but the men apparently tied theirs up on the top of the head. The Muhammadan merchants or natives of the country were more particular as to their clothing, and wore a shirt extending to the waist. All the castes but the first two ate any kind of meat—even mice—except beef. Through the influence of the Brahmans here, as elsewhere throughout non-Muhammadan India, the ox was a sacred animal.

All classes were very fond of chewing betel<sup>1</sup> leaves, which according to Varthema were like those of the bitter orange. The betel leaves were masticated with a paste made from the Areca palm nut and lime made from oyster shells. As may be observed at the present day, this practice is very ugly in its results, as it turns the front teeth to an orange colour. The common people ate their meals out of a brass basin, seated on the ground, and used a leaf as a spoon or simply took the food in their hands. The dietary of the peasantry and poor folk was mainly rice and fish, with a little spice and fruit.

The Zamorin, or Raja, of Calicut wore on his head a cap of gold cloth, and decorated his ears with golden ear-rings set with diamonds, sapphires, and pearls, two of which were larger than walnuts. His arms from the elbow to the wrist, and his legs from the knees downwards, were loaded with bracelets set with precious stones of great value. His fingers and toes were covered with rings. In one ring on his great toe was a ruby of surprising lustre, and in another ring was a diamond bigger than a large bean. The girdle round his waist was made of precious stones set in gold "which cast a lustre dazzling everybody's eyes". His chair of state and the litter or palanquin in which he was carried about were made of gold and silver and adorned with precious stones. The trumpeters of his palace used trumpets of gold and of silver, the mouths of which were encrusted with precious stones. The Raja also had a golden spittoon into which he might eject the saliva caused by the chewing of the betel nut; and at nighttime his palace was lit with silver

<sup>1</sup> The "Betel" or Bital chewed in Southern India and Malaya is composed of the kernel of the Areca palm nut and of the leaves of a vine or creeper, *Chavica betel*, a close ally of the pepper "vine" which produces black pepper.



From a photograph kindly lent

to the Author by Mr. Cam Hagenberg

# A SACRED BRAHMAN BULL



lamps and scented with incense burning in silver censers. [This is from the account given by the Portuguese sea-captain, Cabral, in 1500.] When the Zamorin of Calicut desired to eat a meal he went through the following customs. Four of the principal priests of the town would take the king's food and offer it to the idol<sup>1</sup> of one of the gods, whom they would worship by raising their clasped hands over their heads with the thumbs upwards. After leaving the food exposed for a sufficient time for the god to satisfy his spiritual hunger, it was then placed before the king. Varthema thus describes the particular idol before whom the food of the King of Calicut was offered.<sup>2</sup>

The temple in which this idol was kept was about 6 feet square and 9 feet high, with a wooden door, covered with devils carved in relief. In the midst of this shrine or chapel was placed the idol, made of metal (brass or bronze, probably) on a metal throne. The idol wore a triple crown like the papal tiara; it also had four horns and four large tusks, with a very large mouth and nose, and "terrible" eyes. The hands were made like iron hooks, and the clawed feet were those of a bird. All the paintings round about the temple shrine were of hideous gods or goddesses, and on each side of the shrine was

<sup>1</sup> This idol is termed Deumo by Varthema. The first part of the word is the widespread Aryan root *Dev*, which means a god or demigod. These Hindus of Malabar, as elsewhere in India, believed in a supreme god—usually called Brahma (but by Varthema, Tamerani)—but this Supreme Being they did not attempt to depict or worship by any image or statue. (See note on p. 133.) But the lesser gods, great and small, may run to 330,000,000, according to the Hindu Scriptures. These lesser gods are styled devils by Varthema, a word which exactly suits most of them, though it is one of the delusions of popular etymology to suppose that the word devil has anything to do with the Aryan root *Dev* (which appears in the Latin Deus, Divus, the Greek Zeus, and the Anglo-Saxon Tiu, whence our Tuesday). "Devil" is derived from the Greek Diabolos, which meant "the slanderer", or someone who threw obstacles across your path.

<sup>2</sup> This and other quotations are mainly from the translation of Varthema's original Italian narrative, by the late Dr. George Percy Badger, published by the Hakluyt Society.



a god seated on a throne placed over a flame of fire wherein were burning human souls. These two painted gods each held a (human) soul in his mouth, with the right hand, and with the left snatched at another "soul" still in the fire.

Every morning the Brahman priests went to wash the idol all over with scented water, and perfumed it; then they offered up their worship. . . . In the course of the week they would sacrifice to it in this manner; a small table or altar would be placed in front of the idol and adorned with roses and other flowers. On this table, in a vessel of silver, would be placed the blood of a male fowl thrown on to glowing charcoal, together with perfumes. From a silver thurible, smoking incense was waved round the altar. At the same time a little bell of silver was rung frequently, whilst one or other of the Brahmins would lunge and fence with the bloodstained silver knife which had been used for killing the cock. Waxen tapers were kept lighted during the whole time, and the priest who took the leading part in this sacrifice put on his arms, hands, and feet bracelets of silver which made a noise like bells. When the service was over the priest would fill both his hands with rice, and would then retire, walking backwards, from the altar, keeping his eyes fixed on it until he arrived outside the palace at a certain tree. Then he threw the grain above his head as high as he could over the tree, and returned and removed everything from the altar. When the food *did* reach the king it was on a large leaf in a wooden vessel, and consisted of rice and other things. The king ate it, squatted on the ground, with his Brahmans standing about at a short distance, regarding him with great reverence, their backs bent and their hands before their mouths. No one was

allowed to utter a word while the king was speaking, and all listened to his words with extreme reverence. When the king had finished his meal, the Brahmans took the food which was left over, carried it into the courtyard, and placed it on the ground. Then they clapped their hands three times, and at this clapping a great number of black crows flew down and ate up the remains of the king's repast.

Varthema greatly admired, however, the orderly nature of the town and people of Calicut, and the manner in which justice was strictly administered. This, indeed, seems to have been the characteristic of all Hindu India before the arrival of the Muhammadans, who in many ways spoilt the life of the Indian peoples by introducing rapine, bloodshed, and lawlessness, even though they may have released many of them from the slavery and misery attendant on the Brahman religion, with its innumerable cruel customs. Murder in the dominions of Calicut was punished by a capital sentence, which was impaling, the murderer being spitted on a pointed stake and left to die. Lesser crimes were usually atoned for by fines. The payment of debts was severely enforced, as much through the superstition of the people as by any recurrence to force. If one man owed another money, and would not pay, his creditor endeavoured to take him by surprise and to draw with a green branch a circle round him on the ground where he was standing, saying to him at the time: "I command you by the head of the Brahmans and of the King that you do not depart hence until you have paid me." The man thus enclosed within the magic ring believed himself to be unable to leave it without permission, and would stand and starve there without anyone to guard him; though it is true that if he broke through

this superstition, and attempted to escape, he would be put to death by the orders of the king. Nearly all the travellers who visited India between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries insist on the honesty and sense of justice amongst the non-Muhammadan natives, especially those of the southern half of India. It was on account of their universal integrity that commerce with the southern half of India increased so markedly and that the people (before the Muhammadans came among them in force) thrived in plenty and in peace.

The ships which carried on the ocean traffic between Calicut, Arabia and Persia, Ceylon and the Malay Peninsula at this period were owned and navigated by Muhammadans, mostly Arabs, with some Egyptians, Persians, and Turks. The Hindus of India then and previously, back through the ages, had a horror of the great sea, which to a certain extent accounted for the isolation of India and its civilization; for though in pre-historic times the Aryan Hindus had invaded Ceylon, Java, and Sumatra, they had only had a short journey to make across the waters. The maritime trade between India and other parts of the world was carried on mainly by Arabs on the west, and by the Malay peoples on the east. Probably such sea commerce as existed along the southern coasts of India before the arrival of the Arabs was conducted by Malays, who may afterwards have extended their journeys to Madagascar, and thus have colonized that island, as we know they did. The Arab ships of Calicut in Varthema's day were of 300 or 400 tons capacity, made of well-joined planks, so skilfully put together that they did not need oakum, then so much employed in caulking the ships of the Mediterranean. But the outer surface of the vessels was covered with

pitch, and the planks were nailed on to the framework with iron nails. The timber of which the vessels were built was of superior quality; for the splendid forests of Malabar no doubt produced then, as they do at the present day, at least one hundred and twenty sorts of good timber. The ships were propelled mainly by sails made of cotton fabrics. There were generally two sails to every ship. The anchors were of a kind of marble, an easily carved limestone, and were let down by ropes. During the months from May to August navigation between Arabia, Persia, and Southern India was usually suspended, because the weather was stormy and the sea dangerous. This was during the time of the great rains. But during this period the ships of Calicut were wont to proceed to the equatorial seas between Ceylon and the Malay Archipelago, wherein bad weather, except an occasional tornado, was never to be feared. But for eight months in the year, from September till the end of April, the wind served well, one way or the other, for sea journeys between the Malabar coast, the Persian Gulf, and the Red Sea.

The Raja of Calicut in Varthema's day maintained a standing army of one hundred thousand infantry. As elsewhere in Hindu India, before the Muhammadans influenced the country, there was no cavalry, but elephants were employed in war, more especially for the king's guard. All the Raja's soldiers wore a red silk bandage round the head, and carried swords, shields, and bows. The king was accompanied in state processions by an umbrella instead of a standard: a sunshade made of leaves, and so constructed as to fold up into a case like the leg of a boot. The method of fighting was very ceremonious. The two hostile forces were arranged in opposite camps,

the sacred Brahmans acting as go-betweens because they were scathless intermediaries. These Brahmans would arrange, as it were, a series of duels between the forces, the commanders of which would select one hundred men from each side to meet and fight. They might continue fighting for two or three days, aiming blows with swords at the head and at the legs. When a few men had been killed on either side the Brahmans consulted the hostile kings as to whether they had had enough. If they agreed, then peace was made; if not, another hundred men were selected on each side to carry on the warfare. No doubt, though this is quoted as being the way in which the Hindu wars were carried on, human nature and common sense frequently induced more vigorous measures; and the invasion of the Muhammadans swept away the formalities and ceremonies, which probably had been introduced by the priestly Brahmans to save bloodshed.

The palace of the King of Calicut was about a mile in circumference, of one story, not very high, but with walls and divisions of handsomely carved wood. The floor of the palace was smeared with cow dung, which is greatly used throughout India for its purifying properties, as the ammonia it contains drives away flies and other insects. Mixed with lime and water, moreover, it makes a very smooth and binding cement.

The fruits which Varthema noted in the territory of Calicut, besides the climbing, trailing pepper vines, the myrobalans,<sup>1</sup> and the ginger roots, were the Jack

<sup>1</sup> Myrobalans are the spicy fruits of trees of the *Terminalia* genus.

A few precise indications about "pepper" and its sources in Tropical Asia may be of use to the reader at this stage. Black pepper is ground from the dried seed vessels ("pepper-corns") of *Piper nigrum*, a climbing vine-like plant of the order *Piperales*. White pepper is from the same source, only prepared from the ripe seed vessels after removing the black outer skin. "Long" pepper is the whole fruit spike of minute

fruit,<sup>1</sup> the mango, the melon, the plantain or banana, and the coconut. He refers once or twice to the sour orange. One of the commentators on Varthema's work, in alluding to his stay in Damascus, expresses surprise that he only refers to sour oranges there, and makes no reference to the sweet orange, which has long been such a feature in the beautiful groves round that ancient city. But this omission is another proof of Varthema's veracity, for possibly in India, and certainly in Syria, at that period there were no sweet oranges. The orange which was introduced to mediæval Europe through the Arabs—for such a fruit was practically unknown to the Romans and Greeks before the eighth century of the Christian era—was equivalent to the Seville or bitter orange. The sweet orange was apparently first developed from the wild species, and cultivated in China, whence it was carried to Ceylon and Southern India. It is generally supposed that "the China orange" (as it was called in Elizabeth's day) was first brought to Europe by the Portuguese. This is mainly true, and is the reason why throughout most Arabic-speaking countries the ordinary sweet orange is called to this day "Bordigan" or "Portugal". But Varthema distinctly mentions (if he has been rightly translated) sweet oranges as being cultivated in the southernmost parts of India and in Ceylon, and, if that is the case, it is more probable that the Portuguese obtained from these regions the first sweet-orange trees,

berries, thickly clustered round a single stem of *Piper longum* and *Piper officinarum*. Of these three forms of *Piper*, the two first are indigenous to Southern India, Ceylon, and Malaysia; the last mentioned to Malaysia only. There is also a species of *Piper* yielding pepper in the equatorial forest zone of Africa, and substances like pepper are derived from a variety of quite different plants.

<sup>1</sup> The Jack fruit is so called after the Malay name, *Chaka*. This is *Artocarpus integrifolia*, a near relation of the bread fruit of the Pacific archipelagoes, and belonging to the Fig or Nettle order.

which they introduced into Europe in the early part of the sixteenth century.

As regards the Jack fruit, he noticed the foul-smelling, black, and rotten skin when the fruit was ripe, but declared the pulp to be sweet and delicious, resembling the taste of musk melons or Persian quinces, or a preparation of honey flavoured with a sweet orange. The kernels of the seeds of the Jack fruit when roasted in the fire might be compared with excellent chestnuts. The mango he calls by a widespread Indian name, *amba*, though he mentions that its trunk goes by the name of *manga*. A fruit which he compares to a melon growing on a tree, with three or four large seeds like grapes or sour cherries inside, and which he calls the "corcopal", is not easy to identify. He regarded it as not only extremely good for eating, but excellent for a medicine. Another fruit he compares to a medlar, though it has a white pulp like an apple.<sup>1</sup> As to the plantains or bananas,<sup>2</sup> Varthema distinguishes between the long banana fruits which we now call plantain and the shorter and sweeter type which we call banana. He also alludes to a short kind as being very bitter; this may have been the real wild banana from which the cultivated species have been derived. As to the coconut tree, he calls it the most fruitful tree in the world, and describes it under the name of *tenga*, derived from the Malayalam word, *tangha*. Ten useful things (he writes) are derived from this tree. The first is wood to burn; the second, nuts to eat; the third, ropes (from its fibre) for maritime

<sup>1</sup> Some of the commentators on Varthema identify this fruit he mentions with either the guava or the papaw, forgetting that both these were natives of Tropical America, and were not introduced into Asia by the Portuguese for another hundred years.

<sup>2</sup> The word plantain may be derived from the second part of the Tamil name in Southern India, quoted by Varthema—Malapolanda. The word "banana", not used until the eighteenth century, was derived from West Africa.

navigation; the fourth, thin stuffs (from its bast) which when woven and dyed appear to be made of silk; fifth, charcoal (from the rind of the nut) in its greatest perfection; sixth, wine (from the sap); seventh, water (from the nuts); eighth, oil (from the pulp of the kernel); ninth, sugar, obtained by boiling the sap; and tenth, the useful thatch made from the great fronds. So much was this palm tree prized by the people of Malabar (and other parts of India), that to cut it down was an unforgivable international crime. When kings were at enmity with one another and killed each other's children they could make peace afterwards, but if one king cut down any coconut trees belonging to the other, peace would never be granted "to all eternity".

Another valuable product of Calicut mentioned by Varthema was the low-growing sesamé plant with pretty, delicate flowers, the seeds of which make a very valuable oil. From India the sesamé, like the banana and the coconut, and many other things, was introduced early into the coastlands of Tropical Africa, possibly by Arabs and Malays.<sup>1</sup> But the principal agricultural product of Malabar in that day, as in this, was *rice*. In Southern India wheat is almost unheard of, and jowari—the large durrah or sorghum millet—is only cultivated on the uplands. Rice, instead of bread made of flour, is the almost universal food. Varthema noted that whilst the rice was being sowed in the fields, the musical instruments of the neighbouring city were being played, while "ten or twelve men clothed like devils" danced and made great rejoicing in order to win the favour of the gods, so that at the time of harvest the ricefields might be very productive.

<sup>1</sup> Those familiar with the *Arabian Nights* will recall its mention in the Persian story of Ali Baba: "Open! Sesamé".



He also observed that the money-changers and bankers of Calicut possessed scales and weights so small and delicate that together they did not weigh more than half an ounce, while they were so true that they would turn by a hair of the head. Their ways of testing gold to ascertain its fineness or its degree of alloy were as elaborate and as scientific as those then in vogue in Italy. The methods of selling in the markets between foreign merchants and Hindus were very curious, and probably of Arab or Egyptian origin, since they prevail, or prevailed, throughout much of Egypt, Arabia, Abyssinia, and the Persian Gulf. The foreign merchants sold their goods by interpreters, or men who acted as go-betweens, brokers. The merchant who wished to buy and he who wished to sell, together with the one or two go-betweens, would stand in a circle. The broker would then cover with a cloth a hand of the seller, taking it by the two fingers next to the thumb. Then with the hands concealed by the cloth they would by a pressure of the fingers count from one ducat or dollar or rupee up to one hundred thousand without uttering any words, except yes or no, according as to whether the proposed terms were accepted by the seller. Then the broker (or *kortor* or *lella*) would in the same way cover the hand of the buyer with a cloth and consult him similarly by pressing the fingers until he had ascertained the buyer's limit. Thus by degrees they brought the two parties into agreement and fixed the price.

As to the physicians of Calicut, they were *perhaps* more primitive and barbarous—though not much more so—than the European doctors of Varthema's day. When a Hindu was sick or seriously ill his doctor would send to his bedside a band of music accompanied by singing men

dressed as devils, the said men being fire-eaters, and by some conjuring trick blowing fire from their mouths. Their shouting of songs to a loud accompaniment of instruments was made more impressive by the clattering of wooden rattles. This nonsense was carried on in the belief that sickness was mainly due to a malignant, spiritual agency, and that if sufficient noise and clamour were made the demon who caused the sickness would quit the patient's body. But for lesser complaints they were more sensible, and often had recourse to drugs obtained from vegetables or minerals. They were particularly fond of ginger, which they would pound in water and drink in a decoction.

Varthema and his Persian companion, Khoja Zianor, decided to leave Calicut because the place had been ruined as a market by the war with the Portuguese. From Calicut they journeyed southwards along the river estuaries and lagoons, past Cochin to Kayenkolam, or Kolon, a port much visited by the fifteenth and sixteenth century traders, and situated 20 or 30 miles to the north of the modern Kilon (Quilon). In Kolam he noticed the presence of the "Christians of St. Thomas", the native Nestorian Christians of Malabar, who had persisted unpersecuted in Southern India from the seventh century of the Christian era. Later on they were to be troubled by the aggressive Muhammadans, and still more by the Catholic Portuguese, who conceived for them a violent hatred, and who succeeded finally in bringing them back forcibly to the fold of Rome (in 1599). In the Middle Ages these Nestorian Christians were on more friendly terms with Rome, and Kolam, which is often confused with the place of almost identical name now known as Quilon or Kilon, was Latinized into "Columbum", and had a Roman bishop

of that name in the fourteenth century and earlier. These early Christians of Southern India belonged to that Nestorian branch of the Christian Church which used Syriac as its sacred language and had its headquarters for many centuries in Mesopotamia or the neighbouring parts of Persia (most frequently at Baghdad, which was known as "Babylon"). The Katolikos or Patriarch of Babylon was the ruler of this Church until it passed under the sway of Rome and became known as the Chaldean Church, whose Patriarch now resides at Mosul. But in the middle of the seventeenth century a large section of the Nestorian Christians took advantage of the arrival of the Dutch on the south coast of India to revolt from Portugal and detach themselves from the Roman Church. In 1665 they were brought into communion with the Jacobite Church of Syria, now directed by the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch. These Malabar Christians are of importance in the history of India, since they led, long before the journey of Varthema, to an interest being taken in Southern India by the Pope of Rome.

## CHAPTER V

### Varthema in Ceylon and Further India

From Kilon the two men travelled by sea (noticing the fishing for pearls that was going on as they passed by) round Cape Comorin to the coast of Coromandel, and stopped probably at Negapatam, which is south of the modern settlement of Karikal. Their vessel of course passed through the narrow Pamban channel separating the peninsula of Muntapan (a projection of Continental India) from the Island of Rameswaram, which by means of Adam's Bridge—a long reef of rocks—and the Island of Manar is almost connected with the mainland of Ceylon. It was by this route of islands and rocks that the Aryan conquerors of Ceylon invaded the island about 543 B.C., conquering it from its extremely barbarous Vedda and Negroid inhabitants. [The Vedda are related in structure and origin to the black people of Australia, and even to the primitive races of man existing in Europe ages ago; the Negroid people of Ceylon are a section of the South Indian Tamuls.]

The name Ceylon (Zeylan) is derived from an ancient Arab corruption of the native term Sinhala. The existence of the island was made known to the Roman geographers at the beginning of the Christian era, and perhaps even to the Macedonian Greeks before them. By Claudius Ptolemæus, the Greek geographer who lived at Alexandria in the second century after Christ, it was called

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Tapróbane, a word derived, no doubt, from some Indian source; but its area was immensely exaggerated, not only by classical geographers but by Marco Polo and Nicolò dei Conti. Varthema was the first writer to give a correct guess at its circumference, which he placed at about 1000 miles.<sup>1</sup>

Varthema crossed over in a flat-bottomed ship, or large canoe, called a sampan or champan, and after incurring great perils from shoals and rocks, and traversing the gulf which we know as Palk Strait, he landed somewhere on the north-east coast and proceeded to the mountain region of Kandy, more especially to the vicinity of Adam's Peak, a mountain which for various reasons has attracted an amount of interest and attention on the part of Easterns and of the Western travellers of the Middle Ages altogether disproportionate to its actual height above sea level, which is only 7353 feet. But it was thought by the ancients to be the highest mountain in the world. Its summit, which is about 72 feet in length by 34 feet in breadth, is surrounded by a low stone wall, partly natural, partly artificial. Within this, in the centre, is the actual apex of the mountain, a solid granite rock, and on the top of this rock is the Sacred Footstep.

This is a hollow in the rock bearing a rude resemblance to the imprint of a human foot of very large size, namely, about 5 feet 4 inches long by 2 feet 6 inches broad. It was known to Hindus as the Sri Pada, or Sacred Footstep, and it was thought by them to be the footprint of their god Siva. Later on, when the Buddhist religion spread to Ceylon (where it remains as the principal faith to-day), the footprint was held to be that

<sup>1</sup> Ceylon is 271 miles long and 137 miles broad, and its total area is 25,481 square miles.



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VARTHEMA VISITS THE FOOTPRINT OF BUDDHA ON ADAM'S PEAK, CEYLON



of the founder of the Buddhist religion, the Prince Gotama Buddha. But as soon as the Muhammadan Arab travellers and traders beheld this strange natural feature they ascribed it to Adam, the first man, and developed a legend according to which Adam, after being cast out of Paradise, fell on the island of Ceylon and landed on the top of this peak. Eve meantime descended at Jidda, the port of Mekka, in Arabia. After a separation of two hundred years the angel Gabriel brought them together on the mountain of Arafat, near Mekka. They then wisely retired to Ceylon, which, if there is any truth in the legend, they must have found a very good imitation of Paradise, for it offers one of the nearest approaches to ideal conditions of life, scenery, and climate to be found on the habitable globe.

At the time of Varthema's visit to Ceylon, which was about 1505, the seaports on all parts of the coast<sup>1</sup> were virtually in the hands of the "Moors" (Arabs). The north was in the possession of the Malabars (namely, people of Tamul race and Dravidian language), whose seat of government was at Jafna-patam; and the great central region (since known as the Wanni) and Nuwara-Kalawiya (the north-west) were formed into petty chiefships. At Kotta, near Colombo, there reigned a monarch of ancient lineage and Sinhalese race, descended—at any rate traditionally—from the original Aryan Hindu conquerors of the island. This ruler, who bore a Sanskrit name and title, exercised a shadowy sovereignty over the numerous minor chiefs and kings, amongst others the King of Kandi, the chief stronghold of the Sinhalese ruling race in the south central mountain district. Ceylon at the time of Varthema's visit, and for a century or so

<sup>1</sup> Writes Sir J. E. Tennent in his *History of Ceylon*.



previously, had been steadily degenerating in civilization from the splendid times which followed the Aryan invasion. No longer did the chiefs or people keep up the works for irrigating the land in times of drought or for the constant cultivation of rice, and therefore Ceylon had actually become dependent on the opposite coast of India for supplies of food.

In Varthema's day Ceylon, as for some fifteen hundred years previously, was known to foreigners as the land of precious stones, chiefly rubies. Varthema declares that he saw rubies which had been found at a distance of only two miles from the seashore, at the foot of a long ridge of hills. Foreign merchants who wished to mine for rubies had first to obtain the permission of the King or Emperor of Kotta, and then to purchase a small plot of a little more than two acres, the price of which would have been equivalent to about one pound in English money. Whilst they were digging the land a man was stationed on it to watch their proceedings on behalf of the king, and if any jewel was found which exceeded ten carats in weight the king claimed it for himself, but all stones below that weight were the property of the digger. Marco Polo in his writings stated that the King of Kandi possessed a ruby which was a span in length (namely, about 8 inches) and without a flaw. It was probably what is called a table ruby, but no doubt the account of its size underwent the usual exaggeration of travellers' tales. According to Sir J. E. Tennent (who wrote admirable books on Ceylon in the middle of the nineteenth century), the name Ratnapura, which was the capital of the district of *Safragan*, literally meant the city of rubies, but these beautiful stones were not confined in their distribution to that part of the island, but were still—sixty years ago—found in abundance

on the western plains between Adam's Peak and the sea.

In addition to rubies, Ceylon in Varthema's day, as at the present time, produced quantities of cat's-eyes, sapphires, amethysts, moonstones garnets, spinels, jacinths, and topazes.

As regards its vegetable productions, Varthema makes mention of "sweet oranges", which he calls *melangoli*, and describes as the best in the world. Reference to this statement has already been made on p. 83, but it is not certain that in this description of Ceylon the Italian traveller referred to the ordinary sour-sweet orange to which most Europeans are accustomed.

There is another sweet orange very little known to people in Great Britain, just as there is a "sweet lemon" (*Citrus lumia*) which is common on the southern shores of the Mediterranean and in parts of Asia. The former is styled simply *the* sweet orange. It is really a different species or variety, and is properly known as the *Citrus limetta*. It is exactly like an ordinary orange in appearance, but has the most insipid and even disagreeable taste, and is vapidly sweet and highly perfumed, without any pleasant acid at all.

But the cinnamon tree<sup>1</sup> interested Varthema more than the orange, for he lived at a time when Europeans thought

<sup>1</sup> *Cinnamomum zeylanicum*, an evergreen tree peculiar to Ceylon and belonging to the Laurel order. The fact that cinnamon spice was known to the Egyptians and Hebrews at least a thousand years before Christ, shows how ancient must have been the trading connections between Ceylon and the countries of the Mediterranean. When the Portuguese held Ceylon they used to gather quantities of the berries, which they placed in caldrons with water together with the inner bark and the small points of the ends of the branches. Then they boiled the whole till the water was evaporated. When cooled, the upper portion of what remained was like a paste of white wax, and at the bottom of the caldron there was camphor. Of this paste they made tapers, which they used in the churches during the service at the annual festivals, and as soon as the tapers were lighted all the church was perfumed with an odour of cinnamon.

of little else but spice in preparing all forms of food for the table. He describes the canella or cinnamon tree as being like a laurel in the leaves, with berries like laurel berries, only smaller and whiter. The inner bark of this tree, which is used to make the spice, is obtained from the side branches, and not from the main stem. Every three years these branches are lopped and the bark is stripped off them, and on no account is the stem injured.

From Ceylon, Varthema and his Persian companion returned to the south-east coast of India—the Koromandel coast—and landed at Pulikat, about 22 miles north of Madras, then a good port, which attracted an immense number of Arab vessels from the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea. This region—the Karnatik—was still part of the dominions of the Narsinga or Hindu King of Vijayanagar. From Pulikat, Varthema and his companion boldly voyaged across the broadest part of the Bay of Bengal to the coast of Tenasserim, a journey which he guesses, not very incorrectly, at 1000 miles, and which, no doubt, with the aid of the south-west monsoon wind, they accomplished in fourteen days.

The city of Tenasserim (which he calls Tenassari<sup>1</sup>) stands on the estuary of the river of the same name in the district of Mergui, in the southernmost part of Further India or Lower Burma, and as a town still exists, but has lost its former great importance, partly owing to the attacks made on it and on its commerce by the Siamese in the seventeenth century. The modern port of the district is Mergui on the island of that name. All this region, the possession of which was for some time disputed between the kings of Siam and Burma, but which became Bur-

<sup>1</sup> The name is derived from the Malay language, which here reaches its northern limits. It is Tanah-sri, the "noble land".

mese at the end of the eighteenth century and was ceded to Great Britain in 1826, is a portion of India of the greatest interest to zoologists and botanists, and it is extraordinary that it still remains one of the least-known and least-described parts of the British Empire. Like much of what is called Further India—India to the east of the Bay of Bengal—it belongs to a different zoological province to India proper, and is really part of the great region of Malaysia, which extends from Assam on the north to Borneo and Java on the south. The remarkable features in the fauna of Tenasserim did not escape the observant eye or retentive memory of Varthema, though he makes some mistakes, as, for instance, where he states that the country produces “white parrots”. These white parrots, which are alluded to in travellers’ stories of India in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, are obviously cockatoos, often to be seen at the present day in towns on the coasts of Ceylon and the Malay Peninsula. They really come from the Malay Islands of Ceram and the Moluccas on the borders of the zoological sub-kingdom of Australia, the true home and place of origin of the cockatoo sub-family of parrots. It is easy to understand, however, that owing to the trade with the Malays, of which Varthema tells us much, there should have been cockatoos for sale at Tenasserim.

Varthema also observes that peacocks were in great abundance. These were of a different species to the common blue-necked peacock of India, now of world-wide range. The peacock of Further India is the rarer and still more beautiful *Pavo muticus*, with a neck in two shades of green, a fully plumed crest, and blue and yellow patches of bare skin on the face. It extends in its range from Assam through Burma and Tenasserim to the Malay Peninsula,

and reappears again in the Island of Java, like so many other beasts and birds of Further India. Varthema was also struck by the appearance of a large bird, bigger than an eagle (as he truly remarks) out of the yellow-and-red beaks of which the natives made beautiful sword hilts, the colour of the bird itself being black and red, with some white feathers. He is probably referring to the Helmet-hornbill, *Dichoceros bicornis*, the immense serrated beak of which is surmounted by a double two-pointed helmet of yellowish red marked with black. It is probable that this and other hornbills of the same family were the origin of the "Phoenix" legend. It is interesting to note that the helmet from the beak of such a bird found its way in the Middle Ages to Constantinople, and was there described as the beak of the phoenix, and from it was made a jewelled ladle for drinking sherbet, which is probably still amongst the crown jewels of the Sultan of Turkey.<sup>1</sup>

Varthema noticed the abundance of oxen, sheep, and goats in Tenasserim, as well as tame buffaloes. But goats and sheep at any rate are scarce or absent from that region at the present day. Varthema says that the goat of Tenasserim in the early part of the sixteenth century was much larger and handsomer than the domestic goats of Europe, and the females had always four kids at a birth. There were two kinds of sheep, but that which had "horns like a deer", and was very large and pugnacious, was probably an early type of domestic sheep in Asia, the one with spiral horns growing horizontally from the head. The cocks and hens which Varthema saw at Tenasserim were strange to his eyes. They were three times larger than the fowls he knew in Italy or elsewhere. He was looking at and recording for the first time the large

<sup>1</sup> This statement was made by the late Sir Richard Owen.

domestic breeds developed in Further India, which caused such a sensation in English society about sixty years ago when they were introduced under the names of Brahma-putras and Cochin Chinas. Tenasserim was a great place for cock-fighting, though the sport seems to have been either originated or much encouraged by the Arab merchants, who likewise introduced it into Spain, from whence it spread to England and to Spanish America, where it is the favourite sport at the present day. In Tenasserim (wrote Varthema) the cocks fought with artificial spurs made of bone or of a crocodile's tooth. Sometimes the fights between the cocks would last for five hours and end with the death of both the combatants. Heavy bets were made on the issues of these fights.

As to the fruits of Lower Burma, they seem to have consisted at that day of oranges, melons, limes, lemons, pumpkins, mangoes, and the durian or mangostin. This last fruit is thought by some to be the most delicious in the world, though its outside envelope is foul-smelling.

Varthema notices that the people of this region were under Hindu or Brahman influence and religion (though they are probably now all Buddhists), that the Brahmans were nearly white in complexion, and that the dark-skinned natives (who were of Burmese, Malay, and Siamese race) had such a respect and estimation for the white skin as to be anxious that their young women should first of all marry a Brahman, or even a white foreigner, before espousing one of their own colour, in order that their first children might be white or light-skinned.

The people of the country at that time wore their ears full of jewels, but no jewelled rings on the fingers. They wore long robes of cotton or silk, but their feet were naked, except amongst the Brahmans. Later travellers described

the Burmese gentry of these regions as wearing high caps made of velvet or silk embroidered with gold. Through the lobe of the ear were thrust tubes of gold about 3 inches long, expanding at one end like the mouth of a speaking-trumpet, or rolls of beaten gold which made a large orifice in the lobe and dragged it down towards the shoulder. Amongst other products of Lower Burma, Varthema notices Brazil wood, a dyewood producing a beautiful red colour, which was probably the tree now known as "sappan", of the genus *Cæsalpinia*. This was the wood called "Brazil" in the Romance languages of Western Europe in the Middle Ages, because its deep, glowing tones of red resembled red-hot charcoal. Red wood of this description was occasionally cast up by the sea on the shores of the Azores Islands, and even of Portugal, brought across the Atlantic by the Gulf Stream from Tropical America. In Brazil and Central America there are several trees of the same genus, *Cæsalpinia*, which produce a similar dark-red, purple, or orange dye, and, finding this wood abundant on the coast of Equatorial South America the Portuguese styled this country Brazil, a name which it has borne ever since.

Tenasserim being much under Hindu influence at the time of Varthema's visit, the practice still persisted in aristocratic circles of a widow, after her husband's death, making a great feast for her relations and then throwing herself into the fire in which her husband's corpse was being burnt. Before doing so she would put on all her jewels and gold trinkets. Her relations had previously dug a hole about 6 feet in depth and placed round it four or five bamboos, over which was hung a silken cloth. Then they lit a fire of highly scented substances such as aloes wood, benzoin, sandalwood, Brazil wood, storax,

amber, and incense. Meanwhile, the widow, whilst the feast was preparing, chewed a good deal of betel paste, so that she almost lost her senses. Then she danced madly with other women, and with priests vomiting fire from their mouths and dressed up like devils. When sufficiently wrought up, she tore away the cloth from above the perfumed furnace and threw herself into the middle of the fire. At the same moment her relations and friends smote her with sticks and threw in balls of pitch in order that she might die sooner. Fortunately, this horrible custom, which has so long sullied the annals of Hindu India and is barely extinct at the present day, did not spread in Burma and Siam much beyond the most aristocratic circles.

The people in this country wrote on paper, probably made from rice straw, but more likely imported from China and Japan. Varthema notices that the paper was like that used in Europe, and points out that in this and in some other directions the people in Burma of his day were more advanced than those of Southern India, where, for example, they then only wrote on the leaves of the palmyra palm tree. The Burmese also had very large ships, some of which were flat-bottomed for shallow water, while others were made with high sides, a bow and a peak, and two masts. These large ships were called "junki" (what we now know by the Malay term, junk). Some of these junks, according to Varthema, were as much as 1000 tons in capacity. In some such ship Varthema and his Persian friend put to sea again and returned to continental India, landing at "the city of Banghella" (Bengal)—probably Gauro, a place on the left bank of the Meghna estuary of the Ganges, in the district of Tippera, not far from the sea. Bengal had been for about two



hundred years before his visit conquered by the Muhammadans from the north-west, and was ruled by a Pathan (Afghan) sultan or shah named Ala ad-Din Husein, who maintained a standing army of two hundred thousand Muhammadans. Bengal was then a region abounding in grain, live stock, sugar, ginger, and, above all, cotton. Cotton and silk, but above all cotton, were woven into stuffs of many degrees of fineness and beauty, from muslins to thick quilts, and these stuffs were conveyed in Arab ships to the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, whence they were distributed over East Africa, Syria, Egypt, and Europe. At this seaport of Bengal, Christian merchants—probably Persian Nestorians—resided and traded without let or hindrance. Some of these Armenians seem to have come from Mongolia or Tatar, and their dress resembled that of the peoples of Muhammadan Central Asia at the present day. By the advice of such Christian merchants of Bengal Varthema and his Persian friend decided to sell for cash (probably Venetian ducats) the greater part of their merchandise, but to reserve their coral, saffron, “and two pieces of rose-coloured cloth from Florence” as special goods for trading for rubies in Burma.<sup>1</sup> For this purpose they left Bengal with some of the Nestorian merchants for Pegu, once more crossing the Gulf of Bengal.

Even in those days Pegu contained good houses and palaces built of stone with lime, with a deep moat round the walls. The Burmese here were lighter skinned than the people of Tenasserim; they were almost white in complexion. The King of Pegu was in those days a very powerful monarch, who ruled over much of Upper and

<sup>1</sup> The principal trade goods carried on this journey by Khoja-Zianor were red coral from the Mediterranean, saffron, figured velvet, and knives.

Lower Burma,<sup>1</sup> and, according to Varthema, he had a considerable standing army of infantry and cavalry and a regiment of a thousand Armenian Christians. (The truth of this last statement is much disputed by authorities on the history of Further India. They were more probably Persian Nestorians, or Nestorians of the Hindu warrior caste of Koromandel.)

In this region Varthema saw the most beautiful parrots he had beheld anywhere on his travels. He also noted the abundance of civet cats, which in this region, as in Tenasserim, were apparently kept as domestic animals, and valued for the perfume they produced (though the best

<sup>1</sup> The following is a brief résumé of the history of the Burmese Empire. Burma (formerly known as Brema, Brma) was probably inhabited very anciently by a negro race of low stature like the Andaman Islanders, who exist not far from the coast of Burma at the present day, and perhaps also by a hairy, Australoid people like the Vedda of Ceylon and the Toda of India. Then followed invasions of Proto-Caucasians and Mongolians. The Caucasians passed on to the south, Indo-China, the peninsula and islands of Malaysia; and all Burma (and the rest of Further India and Indo-China) became mainly the domain of yellow-skinned, small-nosed, straight-haired Mongolians belonging to several linguistic groups who no doubt came from the north in the following order: the Mon-Annam, the Siamo-Chinese (to which belong the Shans), and the Tibeto-Burman. The last term, of course, implies that the people speaking the Burmese language are allied in speech and also in race to the inhabitants of Tibet, Bhutan, and parts of western China. The typical Burmese of to-day are, however, a short-statured people as compared to the Tibetans, and are of comely appearance, betraying in their hair, skin colour, and other ways an ancient mixture with the negroid Andamanese type.

From about the commencement of the Christian era Burma came much under Hindu influence, and dynasties of kings arose derived no doubt from Hindu invasions. This Hinduized Burmese empire came to an end after the Mongol invasion from China of 1284. About the time of the arrival of Varthema, however, a native dynasty was arising at Tungu, north-east of Pegu, which gradually established itself over the two other Burmese states that had grown up round the towns of Arakan and Ava (Mandalay). But at length the power left Pegu to radiate from Ava, and the Avan dynasty ruled over all Burma (except Tenasserim) from about 1600 to 1740. Then the Pegu people revolted (they were of the Mon-Annam type) and conquered all the Burmese dominions. But a popular leader, Alompra, arose in the Ava district and carried all before him. The Peguans were, after many battles, reduced to sullen submission, and nearly all modern "Burma" came under his sway. But in the early part of the nineteenth century the kings of Ava so far blundered as to fix a quarrel on the British and attempt to overrun Bengal. The result was defeat, and a loss of a part of their coast possessions. Eventually by 1886 the whole of Burma had been annexed to the British Indian Empire.

civet of commerce comes from Africa). He observed with surprise the enormous bamboos, some of which had the circumference of a large barrel; and the timber (teak), which afterwards proved to be one of the most valuable exports of the country. The elephants here were not so numerous as in Tenasserim and Ceylon. He states that the sole merchandise of the people was jewels, chiefly rubies, which came from a region called "Capellan", distant about thirty days' journey north-east from Pegu. Apparently the other jewels found in the country were the spinel or "mother of rubies", yellow topazes, jacinths, and amethysts.

In order to meet the King of Pegu the two travellers made a futile journey along the coast in what must have been a very large dug-out canoe, about 45 feet long, with a mast made of a thick bamboo. The vessel was mainly propelled, however, by paddles, and went through the water at a great pace. On returning to Pegu they interviewed the king, who was "so humane and domestic that an infant might speak to him". He wore rubies worth the ransom of a large city, but on his toes, not on his fingers. On his legs were great rings of gold set with beautiful rubies. His ears hung down to his shoulders through the weight of the jewels in his earrings.

The king was fascinated with the beauty of the red coral offered for sale by the Persian merchant, the like of which had never before entered Burma. After a number of compliments on both sides, he offered to pay for the coral in rubies, since he had no spare cash at that moment. The Italian and the Persian offered him the coral as a present—a sprat to catch a whale. The king was so overjoyed at their liberality that he swore by all his gods that he would be more liberal than the Persian, and then sent

for a certain little box (about 8 inches in length), worked all round in gold, and full of rubies within and without. There were, in fact, six separate divisions inside each filled with rubies. He placed it before the two, telling them to take what they liked. After more polite chaffering he gave them about two hundred rubies, and then rewarded the Nestorian Christians from China, who had introduced Varthema and his companion, with a present of two rubies each, estimated at that time to be worth, the pair of them, about £200. The rubies which he had given to the Persian, Khoja-Zianor, were estimated to be worth £20,000.

In spite of the importance given to the jewel trade, this part of Burma produced quantities of lac,<sup>1</sup> which was a beautiful crimson dye—crimson lake, in fact, as it was subsequently called.

From Pegu the two travellers proceeded on a ship to the city of Malacca (really pronounced Maláka), a place first mentioned in European annals by Varthema. Malacca, which has been a British colony since 1824, was about 25 miles distant from the islands and coasts of Sumatra. The region of Malacca had, like much else of the Malay Peninsula, been tributary to the kingdom of Siam during the Middle Ages, and was, perhaps, still so at the time of Varthema's visit, though it was governed by a Malay sultan belonging to a dynasty which had been Muhammadan in religion from about 1276. During the thirteenth century, in fact, a good deal of the southern part of the Malay Peninsula, the north of Sumatra (Achin, in 1204), the coasts of Java,<sup>2</sup> of North Borneo, the Sulu Islands, and much else of the Malay Archipelago, had been converted

<sup>1</sup> See p. 72.

<sup>2</sup> The whole of Java did not become Muhammadan till 1478. Before that its religion was Hindu, introduced anciently from India.

to Muhammadanism, chiefly by Arab, Persian, and Gujarati merchants, who first Islamized the remarkable seafaring Malay race, and this people in turn carried the religion of Muhammad as far as the Island of Timor and the shores of New Guinea.

The country round about Malacca was pronounced by Varthema to be not very fertile, an opinion which was apparently correct, and is said to apply to the soil even at the present day. But it was a very wealthy port, inasmuch as it was a good harbour and a place of exchange for the infinitely varied products of the Malay Archipelago and Peninsula on the one hand, and those of Europe, Arabia, Persia, and India on the other. Varthema noticed that tin was found in the neighbourhood. This metal has since proved to be the principal source of wealth of the Malay Peninsula, and has greatly influenced the development of the country, making it possible and worth while to construct railways through this region, which before long will be connected with the railway system of India.

He also refers to the great quantity of sandalwood, but this more probably came from the regions farther west and south, and most of all from the southern islands of the Malay Archipelago. Sandalwood, which is so often referred to in these early voyages, and which was one of the most notable items in the commerce of Southern Asia, is derived from the *Santalum album* tree, a member of the order *Santalaceæ*. It has a most delicious scent, which is almost unfading, and when it is burnt gives out a wholesome, refreshing perfume.

Varthema noticed the abundance of elephants, horses, sheep, cattle, and buffaloes at Malacca, and the fact that leopards and peacocks were very abundant. The Malay people he describes as olive-coloured, with long hair, broad

faces, narrow noses, and round eyes. The leading people of the town of Malacca seem to have been of Javanese origin; indeed Malacca, like Singapore and other important trading centres on the Malay Peninsula, was probably founded by natives of Java. This remarkable island, the name of which (as Jaba diu) probably first reached European ears in the writings of Claudius Ptolemæus in the second century B.C., has played a very important part in the history of the human race. Here have been found the remains of something not unlike the human ancestor, *Pithecanthropos erectus*, and here probably existed for ages some of the lowest types of actual humanity, the last living examples of which were known as the Kalang. There must also have been a negroid population of ancient date. At a very remote period it was colonized, and almost completely populated, by a branch of the Mongolian variety of man, akin to the peoples of Cochin China, Siam, and Burma. From about 500 B.C. it was invaded by Hindus from the Malay Peninsula, and the Buddhist religion, first established, was followed by a revival of the Hindu Brahmanism, in the form of worship of the god Siva. This lasted until the Muhammadan conquest in 1478.

The Malays encountered by Varthema at Malacca appeared to him to fall into two very distinct classes—one given to trade and agriculture, and subject to an organized government of Javanese origin, and the other a wild race, calling themselves Men of the Sea. If he had looked a little farther into the matter he would have noted that there were really three classes of Malay people, the third section being the real natives of the country, rude savages who lived in the forests and gained a livelihood chiefly from hunting, in addition to a little agriculture. Of course a still closer investigation of the southern part of the Malay

Peninsula would have revealed another and more interesting element—the Sakai, or negroid pigmies, relics of the time when all this region between Southern India, the Malay Peninsula, and the islands from the Andamans to New Guinea and the Solomon Archipelago were the domain of that negro sub-species of man which had developed from the still more primitive Australoid, and which in the course of ages spread from Asia to Africa and Southern Europe.

Varthema's Men of the Sea were the sea gipsies or sea people (*Orang laut*) of later travellers, the progenitors, probably, of those wonderful Malay adventurers who in long canoes with outriggers crossed the Bay of Bengal to Ceylon and Southern India, and then made their way to the Maldivé Archipelago, to the Seychelles, the Comoro Islands, and Madagascar, which island they completely colonized; while, on the other hand, they penetrated throughout the Malay Archipelago to all the islands of the Pacific, to New Zealand, and to Australia. Many of these seafaring Malays lived more on the sea than on the land, and gained their living by fishing and by a robbery which was to grow, after Varthema's day, into the most serious piracy that ever afflicted the Eastern seas. This was only put a stop to by the British navy in the nineteenth century, in a manner which will be described in a later volume of this series.

From Malacca, Varthema crossed over to Sumatra, which he was the first traveller to describe under its present name, a name which seems to have been first applied to a city or port in the Achin country (or even to that country itself) at the north end of the island, and, it may be, to an early settlement of Hindus, for the Hindus had penetrated to Sumatra from the Malay Peninsula as they

## Varthema in Ceylon

had gone to Java, and some parts of Sumatra still followed the Hindu religion at the time of Varthema's visit, though it was soon to be extinguished under the inroads of Muhammadanism.

Sumatra is one of the largest islands in the world, about 178,000 square miles in area; but it seemed to Varthema even larger, though he probably did not do more than visit the north-eastern part. Here he describes the people as having almost white skins, broad faces, and eyes round and green. It is quite probable that he encountered tribes that were partly of the Caucasian or White variety of man, and who may even have retained the grey or green eyes which have been developed by that type in Europe, North Africa, and even in North-east India. The Caucasian race (apart from the later Hindu hybrid, which is derived from a mixture of Australoid, Negroid, Caucasian, and Mongol) appears at some remote period to have invaded Malaysia, to have colonized parts of Sumatra, and to have passed through the Malay Islands beyond New Guinea, where it populated a good many of the Pacific Islands, mixing here and there with antecedent negroids and Malays. Thus was founded the Polynesian race, the descendants of which in New Zealand, Samoa, Hawaii, and Tahiti have so frequently a strong facial resemblance to Europeans. Varthema noticed that the people of North-east Sumatra used money, coins of gold, silver, and tin, stamped with devices which were probably Hindu gods, and elephants with cars or chariots.

The country of Pider in Eastern Sumatra produced then enormous quantities of pepper, since identified as *Piper longum*, or the long pepper of commerce,<sup>1</sup> which, like the other forms of pepper of the same genus, grows

<sup>1</sup> See note on p. 82.



as a creeper, clinging to other trees, similarly to ivy. In Varthema's day this long pepper was carried away every year by eighteen to twenty ships and conveyed to the north-east of China, "because, they say, the extreme cold begins there". He also states that an enormous quantity of silk was produced in this part of Sumatra, which was "not very good". These silk cocoons were obtained from the wild species in the forests, no attempt being made to breed silk-producing moths. His statement has subsequently been called in question by writers, who did not conceive of silk being produced other than by caterpillars which fed on the mulberry tree. But the silk to which Varthema refers was probably yielded by an Atlas moth of the genus *Attacus*, or may even have been obtained from thick spiders' webs, which at one time were spun into silk threads.

Varthema mentions the benzoin gum that is produced in the interior of Sumatra. This is the resin of a tree of the genus *Styrax*. The perfumed aloes wood, so often alluded to in his writings, was of two kinds, calampat and calambuco. Neither had anything to do with the Aloe,<sup>1</sup> but were the produce of low trees of the genus *Aquilaria*. When such trees were old they were cut down, and the outer wood or *agila* was separated from the inner part of the tree (calambuco). This, when rubbed in the hands, yielded an agreeable fragrance, while the outer wood or *agila* only did so when burnt. As to the calampat, one of the Nestorian Christians with them gave about 2 oz. of it to the Persian (Khoja-Zianor), telling him to hold it

<sup>1</sup> Aloes-wood or Lign-aloes are really the inside wood of *Aquilaria ovata* and *A. agallochum*, two trees of the *Thymeleaceæ* or Spurge-Laurel order, which contains a fragrant resinous substance of dark colour, formerly used for incense. It is sometimes known as "eagle-wood", and is now used for the manufacture of incense sticks in Burma.

in his hand as long as he could say four times "Miserere deus", then he made him open his hand. "Truly, I never smelt such an odour as that was, which exceeded all our perfumes." . . . "Afterwards he took a piece of benzoin as large as a walnut and about half a pound of calanipat and placed them in two chambers of a vase, with fire within. In truth, I tell you that that little produced more odour and greater softness and sweetness than two pounds of any other kind would have done". Varthema has previously explained that most of these highly scented woods in that day never reached European markets, because they were in such great request in China; the Chinese notabilities, kings and emperors, being so much wealthier than the potentates of Europe, were able to buy up all the supplies. This and much other information was given to him by the amiable Nestorian Christians with whom they travelled.

This part of Sumatra abounded in elephants, of the Indian species of course, but apparently with big tusks. Varthema saw two tusks which together weighed 335 lb. He also noted the enormous shells of the sea turtles, probably of the kind which produces tortoise shell. These he declares were large enough to serve as roofs for the huts, or even as domed roofs for the walled houses of stone, which he declares were to be found in the principal seaport of this part of Sumatra. Much gold was obtained from this region, and the natives were extremely skilful in manufacturing gold boxes and other works of art. These boxes when finished would be sold for the value of about thirteen shillings! The Sumatrans were also practised shipwrights, and constructed large junks with three masts and a prow before and behind, and each prow with a rudder. Thus, when they chose, they could

immediately reverse the direction of the ship by dropping one sail and hoisting another, without turning round.

When about to leave Sumatra, the Nestorian Christians who had accompanied them so far from India were desirous of returning thither, but the Persian begged that they would still go with them and make up a party to visit the Spice Islands, where the Persian might see for himself the nutmeg and clove trees. To enlist their sympathy he confessed to them that his Italian friend had not been born a Persian, but a Christian of Italy, and that he had been sold as a slave in the city of Jerusalem. Varthema confirmed the statement, and added that this occurred when he was fifteen years old—an obvious falsehood, since, as we know, he could not have left Italy on this journey much before the age of twenty-three or twenty-four. The Nestorians were much moved at hearing this, and promised that if Varthema would return with them to India they would make him rich in the course of trade, and would not interfere with his still remaining a Muhammadan. But the Persian told him that he was already pledged to marry his niece. No doubt, all the time, Varthema was forming his own plans, which did not fit in with either of these kindly proposals.

But the Nestorians from China consenting to make the journey to the Spice Islands, the Persian was so gratified that he gave them a handsome present of rubies. They then purchased and arranged a sampan or champan—a flat-bottomed sailing vessel—and having put on board a good supply of food, including plenty of fruit, they set out for the Banda or Nutmeg Islands. In the course of this voyage these bold explorers [of whom the Persian is, perhaps, the most remarkable, since he was actuated rather by sheer love of travel and of seeing strange sights than of gaining merchandise] not only called at the Banda

Islands and the Moluccas, but also visited the coast of Borneo (where they changed into a larger ship), and then finally came to Java, where they stayed some time; and from there they made their way back in another big junk to Malacca. In regard to these journeys I shall write nothing here, as they take us too far beyond the bounds of India and Further India, but it is interesting to note that when Varthema was in Java his Nestorian companions pointed out to him that from the direction of the shadow cast by the sun at midday (namely, when the sun was in the north of the heavens instead of the south) it was evident that they had passed beyond the Equator and were within the southern half of the Globe, while the Malay captain of the vessel in which they had sailed from Borneo to Java, who steered his ship by means of a compass and a chart, told them that far away to the south, beyond islands small and great, there lay a region colder than any other part of the world, in which (in wintertime) the day only lasted for four hours. This is one amongst many other indications showing how far Malays in their voyages had penetrated towards Australia and beyond, into the Antarctic Ocean.

When they reached Malacca on their return the Nestorian Christians from China uttered "wailings and lamentations impossible to describe" at the thought that they were now about to be separated from Varthema. This person declared that if he had not had a wife and children he would have gone with them. Whether in this he was telling the truth and referring to a family which he had left behind in Italy, or whether it was a polite excuse for evading the invitation to proceed with these Nestorians to Northern China, we do not know. But the party separated at Malacca, and in the large junk in which Varthema and the Persian had sailed from Java they

continued their journey across the Bay of Bengal to the Koromandel coast; and at Negapatam exchanged into a sampan, in which they went to Quilon, where they found twenty-two Portuguese already residing.

The sight of these Christians inspired Varthema with a great desire to escape from association with Muhammadans and to return to Europe, but he seems to have been afraid that if he joined them too hurriedly he might be killed by the Muhammadans as a renegade who had deceived them. Together with his Persian companion he travelled to Calicut, and here encountered two Italians from Milan, who had come out on Portuguese ships to India to select and purchase jewels for the King of Portugal. But for some reason they had fled from the Portuguese at Cochin, and had taken refuge at Calicut, where they went about almost naked, after the fashion of the natives, and were obliged to make cannon for the King of Calicut. When Varthema and these two Milanese discovered that they were not only fellow Christians but fellow Italians, they wept profusely, kissed and embraced; but Varthema at first, from long disuse of the Italian speech, found his tongue "large and hampered".

Together they discussed in night meetings how they might escape from India, and return to their own land. The Milanese were frightened to go back to Cochin, and put themselves in the hands of the Portuguese, after they had manufactured cannon for their enemies, the people of Calicut. However, Varthema said he would find a way out of the difficulty. He started by resorting to the mosque of the Arab merchants, where he slept and prayed, and assumed the demeanour of a Muhammadan saint, repudiating any interest in property, and pretending to eat no flesh, though at night time he secretly resorted to the

house of the Italians, and in their company devoured four roast fowls. With reluctance he accepted the invitations of his kindly and faithful Persian friend, who scolded him for refusing meat; but he replied that too much eating led man to commit many sins. At last his reputation for holiness became so great that the Muhammadan merchants deemed themselves happy if they could kiss his hand or his knees, and one of these merchants falling sick, the saintly Varthema—or Yunas (Jonah), as he was called by them—was summoned to effect a cure. This he accomplished after making some extraordinary mistakes in regard to his medicines. The cure that he effected increased his reputation for sanctity.

Meantime he heard that twelve Portuguese ships had arrived at Kannanor, that there were many soldiers in armour, and that a fort was in process of construction. This news was brought by two Persian merchants, and created the profoundest sensation in Calicut. Varthema was greatly exercised in his mind how he might escape from Calicut to Kannanor, and go over to the Portuguese. He therefore redoubled his hypocrisy and protestations of attachment to the Muhammadan faith, and even led the service in the mosque which was held to invoke the protection of God against the infidel Christians. Then for eight days he shammed illness, and pretended to starve the whole time, though he secretly ate with his Italian friends at night time. The Persian, Khoja-Zianor (towards whom he seems to have been most ungrateful), professed to feel the greatest concern at his failure in health, and suggested change of air, even proposing that Varthema should proceed in the company of the Persian messengers to Kannanor, where he did not believe he would be in any serious danger from the Portuguese.

Varthema jumped at the chance, and attempted to start with these Persians in a small boat. He did so without taking formal leave of the other Muhammadan merchants or notabilities of the place, "all of whom knew me and bore me great affection, and knew well what the genius of Christians was. I feared that if I took leave of them they would think that I wanted to escape to the Portuguese." However, just after the boat had left the shore, four soldiers came and called to its captain to return. They then asked: "Why do you carry away this man (Varthema) without leave of the king?" The Persians answered: "This man is an Arab saint, and we are going to Kannanor." "We know well that," said the Naïri warriors, "but he understands the language of the Portuguese and will tell them all that we are doing here." They therefore ordered the captain of the ship that he should not take him away on any account, and accordingly he started without them. The two Persians and Varthema remained on the seashore, whilst the soldiers returned to the king's house. One of the Persians then proposed returning to their residence in Calicut, but Varthema advised them not to do so, as they would lose some fine pieces of cloth which they were carrying, because they had not paid the king's customs duties. They then appealed to Varthema for advice, and he proposed that they should walk along the shore until they found a small boat at some distance from the town. Accordingly they walked for 12 miles by land laden with their goods, while Varthema was heartsick at the danger of his position. But at last, after walking this distance, they found a small boat on the coast which took them over to Kannanor. Arrived at this place, Varthema presented a letter of introduction given to him by his Persian friend to a merchant in Kannanor, in which letter

his being a great saint as well as a particular friend and connection by marriage of the Persian were duly set forth. The merchant, as soon as he read the letter, laid it on his head and said he would answer for him with his life, and immediately had an excellent supper prepared with many chickens and pigeons. When the two Persians who had travelled with him saw the chickens appear, they, in their inconvenient zeal, made an outcry, declaring that Varthema was a saint and did not eat flesh. So, apparently, he had to make his supper off less-attractive things, no doubt to his secret chagrin. When supper was over the Persians proposed an excursion to the seaside for amusement, and they actually walked down to the vicinity of the Portuguese fleet. "Imagine, O reader, the joy I felt." They even came to the vicinity of a low house containing three empty casks, the outskirts of the Christian factory or trading establishment. Varthema longed to bolt from his companions to the inside of the factory, but feared if he did so the whole country would be in an uproar. He therefore determined to wait until the following day, which was a Sunday.

He then rose early and announced his intention of going for a walk. To his great relief his companions replied: "Go where you please." Coming to the seashore he met two Portuguese, and asked whereabouts was the Portuguese fort. They in return asked if he was a Christian. He replied: "Yes; praise be to God!" and that he had come from Calicut. One of the Portuguese conducted him for half a mile along the beach into the fortress, where they arrived at the moment that the commandant was proceeding to breakfast. Varthema immediately fell on his knees at the feet "of his lordship", saying: "Sir, I commend myself to you to save me, for I am a Christian".



At this juncture they heard a great uproar in the neighbourhood, now that it was perceived that Varthema had escaped. The people of the town, however, did nothing, and Varthema, very basely, then proceeded to give the commandant of Kannanor, Don Lourenço de Almeida, all the particulars about the native fleet and armature, which were preparing to resist the Portuguese at Calicut. He was subsequently dispatched in a Portuguese ship to Cochin, where he obtained a safe-conduct for his two Milanese friends from the Viceroy of Portuguese India. On his return to Kannanor, and by means of money given to him by the Portuguese, he induced a Hindu to carry his letter and safe-conduct to the two Milanese at Calicut. But these Milanese desiring to carry away all their goods and treasure, and also their native wives and children, the matter of their escape was bungled, so that they were killed by the soldiers before they could leave.

Soon after this occurred a terrific naval fight between the Portuguese and the fleet of Calicut, in which the former gained the victory. Varthema took part in much other fighting between the Portuguese and the Muhammadans of Southern India, but at last obtained the desire of his heart. In December of the year 1507 he embarked on a Portuguese ship, crossed over to the Somali and Mozambique coasts, and, after rounding the Cape of Good Hope, safely arrived at Lisbon, whence, after paying his court to the King of Portugal, and receiving from him confirmation of the knighthood which had been conferred on him in India, he made his way to Rome. He received absolution for his desertion of the Christian faith, the only penance inflicted on him being the order to relate his experiences to a person delegated by the Pope to make a record of this extraordinary journey.

## CHAPTER VI

### The Portuguese in India—Barbosa's Voyage

It was with the aid of a force of English crusading troops that the Portuguese people under a German prince captured Lisbon from the Moors. A commerce in wine, salt fish, woollen cloth, and other things arose between Portugal and England; and towards the close of the fourteenth century an English princess married the heir to the Portuguese crown and became the mother, amongst other sons, of the remarkable Prince Henry the Navigator, who, in the first half of the fifteenth century, did so much to direct Portuguese maritime enterprise towards African discovery.

This effort of the Portuguese to reach Western Tropical Africa was stimulated by three main impulses (as already indicated): a need for slaves to till the lands of southern Portugal vacated by the Moors; a greed for gold; and a craving for pepper and spice in food. The use of strong flavours, aromatic essences, hot and spicy condiments in European cookery was becoming something of a mania, which was to reach its climax perhaps in the middle of the seventeenth century. Venice—the grocer of medieval Europe—had built up immense wealth by “holding the gorgeous East in fee” through her friendly relations with the Mamluk Sultans of Egypt and Syria, and her development of the overland trade with India. Her bitter rival republic of north-western Italy—Genoa—balked of her

due share of Eastern commerce, had early in the history of this rivalry sought through her seamen and ambassadors to revenge herself, and to create allies against Venice, by urging England, Aragon, Portugal, and Castile to embark in the Levantine trade, or to seek out maritime routes to India across the Atlantic or round the island continent of Africa. Genoese mariners and merchants inspired the kings and princes of Portugal with the ambition of reaching India across oceans, which should be far beyond the scope of the Venetian navy and almost equally safe from the hostility of the Moslem allies of Venice. In the case of Spain similar promptings of the Genoese Columbus led to the discovery of America. Where Portugal was concerned we find Genoese and other Italian captains taking a prominent part in the first century (the 13th) of maritime discovery along the Atlantic coasts and islands of north-west Africa; but as soon as the Portuguese had learnt the lessons of navigation from their Italian teachers—though they still did not disdain their co-operation (as we see in the case of the Florentine Amerigo Vespucci, who assisted to discover Brazil, and the Venetian Antonio Pigafetta, the last-mentioned having accompanied Portuguese expeditions in Malaysia)—they shot ahead of Italian enterprise and became the most daring seamen and discoverers the world has ever known, except those of Britain and Ireland, Holland, and Norman France.

In 1486 the Portuguese knight, courtier, and sea captain, Bartolomeu Diaz de Novaes, sent out to pursue the investigations of the West African coast line (which had been carried by Diogo Cam, the discoverer of the Congo, as far south as the vicinity of Walfisch Bay), was driven in his ship to the south of the Cape of Good Hope by gales of wind. Turning again to the east and north when the seas

moderated, he sighted the coast between Mosse! Bay and Port Elizabeth, and realized then, in its northward trend, that he had rounded Africa. Returning to Lisbon with this information, the name of his "Stormy Cape" was changed to that of "Good Hope" by the King John II, who had already dispatched de Covilham and Paiva to enquire into the course which ships should follow between South Africa and India. King John received this confirmatory information from Covilham in Egypt (through the Jew, Josef of Lamego) about the year 1490; and further details were sent to him at a later date by de Covilham in Abyssinia.

By 1497 an expedition of three well-furnished ships was dispatched from Lisbon under the command of VASCO DA GAMA. This expedition rounded the Cape of Good Hope and dropped anchor for rest, refreshment, and enquiry at the important Arab station of Sofala, near the modern Beira. Here they picked up pilots and information which enabled them to continue their journey up the East African coast to Malindi, some distance to the north of Mombasa. From Malindi, steered by their Arab pilots and taking advantage of the south-west monsoon, they sailed across the Indian Ocean to the Malabar coast of India, and reached Calicut about the end of May, 1498.<sup>1</sup> It had taken them eleven months to do the sea journey from Portugal, but then they had made a prolonged stay at various places on the east coast of Africa.

The Portuguese ships were well received by the Raja or Zamorin of Calicut, and when Vasco da Gama set out to return to Portugal, after nearly six months' stay on the Malabar coast, he bore with him a letter to the king from

<sup>1</sup> The exact date and month are still in dispute, some authorities making it the 20th of May, and others deferring the arrival till the beginning of August.

the Raja of Calicut, in which the ruler of Portugal was informed that in Malabar there was abundance of spices, pepper, and precious stones, and that what India wanted in return from Portugal was gold, silver, copper, and vermilion.

In 1500 another Portuguese expedition of thirteen ships, carrying seven hundred soldiers, under the command of Pedro Alvares Cabral, sailed from Lisbon for Calicut, but, being driven westward by stress of weather, discovered—or rediscovered—the coast of Brazil. After considerable delays the expedition reached Calicut, and Cabral established a trading agency or factory there under the charge of some Portuguese merchants, and also founded another trading station at Cochin. After his departure, however, the factory at Calicut was sacked and destroyed by the Muhammadan merchants at that place, and all the Portuguese were massacred, as already related.

In 1502 the King of Portugal obtained from the Pope (Alexander VI) a Bull which constituted him supreme lord over the navigation, conquest, and trade of Ethiopia, Arabia, Persia, and India; and gave him, in fact, a monopoly over the ocean routes and commerce of Southern Asia. After receiving this recognition of the Portuguese monopoly of the Indian Ocean and the commerce of Southern Asia, the king dispatched Vasco da Gama once more with a fleet of twenty vessels. Da Gama made alliances with the Hindu rajas of Cochin and Kannanor and the Queen or Rani of Quilon.<sup>1</sup> He then proceeded to Calicut, and bombarded the palace of the Zamorin to punish him for the destruction of the Portuguese factory and murder of its merchants in 1500, as well as for the war

<sup>1</sup> Pronounced Kilon, and a corruption of the Hindu name, Kolon, or Kolam, the Columbum of the Nestorian and Roman Churches.

which was being waged against the Raja of Cochin for having been friendly to the Portuguese. At Cochin a fort or castle was built in which a garrison of one hundred and fifty Portuguese soldiers was placed under Duarte Pacheco. This fort, of course, was armed with cannon of stone or bronze, and it was entirely with artillery and firearms that the Portuguese at that period won such remarkable victories over Indian, Arab, and Turkish ships or soldiers.

Firearms and cannon had been introduced into Egypt at the close of the fifteenth century, and the Turks made use of this new arm soon after their conquest of Constantinople. But firearms had scarcely reached the west coast of India at the time of the Portuguese arrival, and were unknown in Ceylon; though from Varthema's references to the skill with which the Malays made fireworks it is possible that gunpowder had already been introduced into parts of Southern Asia from China, for the Chinese claim to have invented and used this explosive independently of its discovery and fabrication in medieval Greece, England, and Germany.

After Vasco da Gama had left India the Raja of Calicut once more attacked Cochin, but he was so signally defeated both on land and on sea by the one hundred and fifty Portuguese under Pacheco, who had infused order, discipline, and valour into the ranks of the soldiers of Cochin, that he did not again attack the place. Thus the Portuguese acquired a notable prestige in the eyes of the Hindu peoples of Southern India, who began to look on them as a possible ally against the Muhammadans who by land and sea were attempting to conquer all India.

In 1505 twenty ships and one thousand five hundred soldiers were sent to India under Francisco de Almeida, who was created the Viceroy of the King of Portugal.

## Pioneers in India

Almeida proceeded to fortify the Portuguese trading stations on the Malabar coast, and explored the western littoral of India northwards towards the mouth of the Indus. But by this time the Muhammadan power on the Mediterranean was awake to the danger threatening its co-religionists in India and its very lucrative trade with Southern Asia. The Mamluk Sultan of Egypt dispatched a fleet from the Red Sea to exterminate the Portuguese on the coast of India. This fleet met a force of Portuguese ships off Chaul on the Bombay coast (near the Kolaba inlet) in 1508, and in the desperate naval fight which ensued the Portuguese were worsted. But on the 2nd of February, 1509 (one of the important dates in the history of India)\* this Egyptian fleet was completely defeated off the Island of Diu.<sup>1</sup>

In 1509 one of the greatest Portuguese in history became viceroy on the coast of India—AFFONSO D'ALBUQUERQUE.<sup>2</sup> Albuquerque had distinguished himself in 1503 by rendering assistance to the Raja of Cochin. He returned again to the East in 1506 in company with the great Portuguese admiral, Tristam da Cunha (who discovered the lonely little Tristan da Cunha archipelago of islands in the South Atlantic, now a British possession). Albuquerque conquered from the Arabs most of their principal cities on the east coast of Africa, and in 1507 attempted to garrison the Isle of Hormuz at the entrance to the Persian Gulf. He reached the Malabar coast at the close of 1508, and then displayed the secret commission he had received from the King of Portugal to replace the governor, Francisco de Almeida. But

<sup>1</sup> Diu is an islet of about 30 square miles, immediately off the coast of the southern extremity of the Gujarat or Kathiawar Peninsula. This islet was subsequently ceded by the King of Gujarat in 1535, and has ever since been in the possession of Portugal.

<sup>2</sup> A name which has been misspelt in history. It should be Albuquerque.

Almeida refused to recognize Albuquerque's authority, and even cast him into prison, from which he was only released by the arrival three months afterwards of a large fleet of Portuguese vessels, the commander of which deposed Almeida and set Albuquerque free.

Albuquerque attempted to capture Calicut in January, 1510, but failed to do so, and was wounded. However, he was more fortunate in regard to Goa, though he did not finally secure possession of that place till November, 1510, soon after which time it became the chief city and capital of the Portuguese possessions in India. He then in 1510-1 sailed round Ceylon right across the Gulf of Bengal to Malacca, which he seized and garrisoned, and from this point dispatched Antonio de Abreu to open up a trade with Siam and the Spice Islands.

Malacca had been visited by the Portuguese first in 1509, no doubt as the result of the information gleaned from Varthema. The expedition which sailed from Portugal direct was accompanied by the famous Magellan, or, as his name should be written, Magalhães, who subsequently achieved the first circumnavigation of the Globe, and who was a Portuguese subject, though he afterwards, out of pique, transferred his services to Spain. Magellan warned the commander of the Malacca expedition, Diogo Lopez Siqueira, of the treacherous intention of the Malays to attack him. Whereupon the Portuguese commander seized two natives as hostages—a man and a woman—and caused arrows to be shot through their skulls. They were then sent ashore, apparently not dead, to the Sultan of Malacca, to convey to him a very plain hint that any treason he might perpetrate would be "punished with fire and sword". The sultan, not unnaturally, retaliated by arresting the Portuguese in the factory on shore, who



were collecting cargo for the ships. Whereupon Siqueira burnt one of his vessels, which was not ready to leave, and sailed direct for Portugal, having acted in every way imprudently and unjustifiably. The Portuguese left behind were not massacred, but were afterwards released by Albuquerque.

On Albuquerque's return journey to Malabar, in 1512, the vessel in which he was sailing, and in which he had stored the immense private treasure he had amassed in his conquests, was wrecked on the coast of India, and he not only lost all his wealth, but was very nearly drowned.

On his return to Goa he found the place almost lost to the Portuguese by a native revolt. This he suppressed. He then started with a naval expedition to the Red Sea, in order to establish Portuguese authority on that channel of communication and cut off the Egyptians from naval access to India. But he did not succeed in this enterprise, though he attempted to seize Aden and circumnavigated the Red Sea. Before returning to India he retook the Island of Hormuz, which the Persians had recaptured, and it remained a Portuguese possession thereafter until 1622.<sup>1</sup> But his failure to achieve anything remarkable in the Red Sea had, with other causes of envy and jealousy, given his enemies in Lisbon an advantage over him, and on returning from Hormuz to Goa in 1515 he met, before he could land, dispatches from Portugal announcing that he was superseded as viceroy. The blow broke his heart, and he died soon afterwards on board his vessel.

In 1517 the King or Emperor of Kotta, near Colombo, in South-western Ceylon, allowed the Portuguese to build a fort at what is now Colombo, and from this time onwards,

<sup>1</sup> When with the assistance of English ships and artillery the Persians recovered it.

till 1644, they established their rule all along the coast districts of the island, though they were kept at bay by the King of Kandi, another representative of the old Aryan or Sinhalese dynasties.

The Portuguese expedition which started in November, 1511, from Malacca to find the Spice Islands, not only reached the Moluccas and Banda Archipelagoes, with their famous cloves and nutmegs, but also discovered the island of Célebes, the south coast of Borneo, the north coast of Java, and most of the islands of the Malay Archipelago as far east as New Guinea. Magalhaës, afterwards known as MAGELLAN, also accompanied this expedition. This remarkable man, who was born at Sabrosa in the Traz-os-Montes province of Portugal, was of noble birth, and was brought up as one of the pages of the queen of King John II. He went out in 1504 with the viceroy, d'Almeida, and was wounded at Kannanor in 1506, and again at the battle of Diu in 1509. In the interval he had gone across to East Africa to assist in building a fortress at Sofala. He fought so bravely in Siqueira's expedition that he was raised to the rank of captain. He afterwards joined Albuquerque, and was present at the taking of Malacca. When he returned to Portugal in 1512 he was raised in rank of nobility and then sent to Morocco, where he was again wounded, this time so severely that he was lame for life.

Soon afterwards he fell into disfavour with the King of Portugal, as he was accused of having traded with the Moors, and he was led to understand that he would not be further employed. He was so indignant at this ungrateful treatment that he renounced his nationality and offered his services to Spain. He was joined in this desertion by other disappointed Portuguese, amongst

them his cousin, Duarte de Barbosa, whose travels will be alluded to shortly. Magellan proposed to the Spanish monarch and his ministers a renewal of Columbus's original idea—that of reaching the Spice Islands and India by sailing westwards across the Atlantic. He believed that a ship would be able to pass round the extremity of South America, then only known vaguely as the “land of Brazil” and the “mainland” between Panama and Venezuela. After the usual heart-breaking delays his fleet left Spain in 1519, passed through the Magellan Straits into the Pacific Ocean, and for ninety-eight days sailed across this waste of waters—half-starved on bad provisions, so that they had to eat leather, sawdust, and rats! and tortured with thirst—only seeing two islets on the way, until at last they reached Guam, in the Ladrone Archipelago. Thence they proceeded to the Philippines, which they discovered and named. After this, Magellan lost his life in a fight with the natives on an island near the coast of Borneo, and only one ship of his fleet, the *Victoria*, and thirty-one of his men, captained by a Basque, Juan del Cano, reached Seville in the first vessel that ever sailed round the Globe. Although the scope of Magellan's journey scarcely touches those regions of India which are described in this book, it is worthy of mention here since it provoked many imitators and affected the future of India and Further India in several ways.

DUARTE DE BARBOSA, Magellan's cousin, must have left Lisbon for the coasts of Africa and India about 1501. He cruised about the waters of the Indian Ocean, as far east as the vicinity of New Guinea between the beginning of the sixteenth century and the year 1516 or 1517. The book which he finished writing in 1516 is really a remarkable geographical treatise dealing with the East

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African, Arabian, Persian, and Indian coasts, and with the islands and peninsular of Malaysia. It can scarcely all have been written by Barbosa; it is thought that portions were written by Magellan himself. We need only take up this narrative where it touches the precincts of India, in the Island of Hormuz, at the entrance to the Persian Gulf. He gives an excellent description of the rise of Shah Ismail, who became the supreme monarch of Persia and of much of the surrounding countries, and founded the Shiah rite among the Muhammadans in its present form.<sup>1</sup>

• Ismail was the third son of Sheikh Haidar the Sufi<sup>2</sup> or "mystic", a saintly personage of north-west Persia who claimed descent from Musa, the great-great-great-grandson of Ali the son-in-law and Fatima the daughter of the prophet Muhammad. Sheikh Haidar seems to have married a Persian princess, who was not only the daughter of a former king of Persia but also of Despina, a Greek queen-consort of Persia, whose father was the Emperor of Trebizond (Kalo Ioannes Komnenos); so that Ismail, his son, was exceedingly well descended. Sheikh Haidar and his two elder sons lost their lives in battle or in prison, pursued by the generals or governors of the Turkoman Shahs of Persia, for the very reason of their distinguished ancestry and because of Sheikh Haidar's repu-

<sup>1</sup> The Muhammadan world soon after the death of Ali's two sons, Hassan and Husein, became divided into two principal sects, the Sunni, or orthodox, and the Shia. The last-named (the word means "sect" in Arabic) attached a special importance to Ali and his descendants, and imported many tenets into the Muhammadan faith of a mystic nature. But they could not make much headway in Africa, Arabia, Syria, Turkey, Asia Minor, Circassia, Afghanistan, or India; only in Persia. The Mughals and Afghans remaining Sunnis was one reason why Persia was never fused in one great empire with India.

<sup>2</sup> Sufi or Sawafiya (the Mystics) was the Arabic name given to this dynasty, which ruled Persia for over two hundred years, so that in French and English literature of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and early eighteenth centuries the Shah of Persia was called the Great Sophy!

tation as a religious leader. The youth Ismail found it convenient after his father's death to affect a complete detachment from worldly affairs by doing what so many Muhammadan saints, mahdis, adventurers, and prophets have done before and since. Together with his attached following he went about naked, abandoning property and signs of princely rank. He and his disciples merely covered themselves with the skins of goats, leopards, and gazelles. They scarred their arms and breasts with red-hot iron, and went heavily loaded with iron chains, but were careful to provide themselves with axes and iron maces as weapons. They wandered from place to place, living on the alms of charitable people, and wherever they went shouted aloud the name and attributes of Ali, the husband of the Prophet's daughter. The world of Islam is always ripe for a change and a revolt, and this eccentric behaviour of Ismail and his followers attracted so much favour that he was soon able to make free with other people's property, which he took by force and distributed amongst the poor. His followers in Gilan (near the Caspian Sea) he clothed in hooded cloaks of scarlet-dyed wool. He asked not to be called king but "leveller of property". But after a time his madness was tempered with discretion, and he left even rich people a reasonable proportion of their goods, so that at last he became known as the "equaller of property". A few successes in arms opened to him the town of Tabriz, and soon afterwards he became *de facto et de jure* Shah of Persia and ruler of an immense realm from the Oxus to the Euphrates. These achievements and the spread of the Shia heresy of Muhammadanism drew down on him an attack from the Sultan of Turkey and the Mamluk Sultan of Cairo, who were at first successful on account of their artillery.

In these battles the national spirit of Persia rose so strongly against the Arab and Turkish domination of centuries that many Persian women disguised themselves as men-soldiers and accompanied their husbands into battle, fighting so bravely that Sultan Selim I of the Turks ordered that their corpses should receive an honourable burial. Ismail after his defeat opened up relations with the Portuguese, in the hope that through them he might obtain the artillery necessary for him to war successfully with the Turks, and therefore a Persian embassy proceeded to India to confer with the Portuguese viceroy, or "great captain" (Capitão-Môr) as he was sometimes called.

Ismail, who died in 1524, was the first shah of that remarkable Sufi dynasty, which ruled Persia and Afghanistan and held the approaches to India from 1500 to 1732.

At the time of Barbosa's first visit to the island and city of Hormuz this then important point near the mouth of the Persian Gulf was apparently independent of either Persia or Arabia, and was governed by a king of its own, the king was, however, very much of a puppet in the hands of his ministers, while the real government was carried on by the council, who ruled the island and such territory as belonged to it on the mainland. If the king attempted to interfere, or if he possessed younger brothers who showed any inclination to take part in the government, he or they were seized and blinded, and then put away with their wives in asylums. The method which was used for depriving them of sight was (according to a Jewish traveller of the sixteenth century) as follows. A brass basin was heated nearly red-hot in a furnace and then passed several times before the eyes of the person who was to be blinded, in such a way that the intense

heat of the red-hot brass destroyed the optic nerve, though on recovery from the first effects the eyes resumed a limpid and bright appearance.

The town of Hormuz was small, but very handsomely built of lofty stone houses, roofed with flat terraces, and provided with fans which drove down the air from above to the basements, to make the houses as cool as possible in the terrible heat of a Persian Gulf summer. The inhabitants of the city were Persians and Arabs, and the Persians are described as being very white and good-looking people, of handsome bodies, both men and women, but the Arabs were dark-coloured, and often imported numbers of negro slaves. Although Hormuz produced nothing in the way of food on its own account, the city was very well provided with the elements of good living; sheep, fowls, pigeons, and cattle were brought over from the mainland, together with wheaten bread, rice (from India), apples, grapes, pomegranates, peaches, apricots, figs, dates, melons, radishes, and green stuff for salads, all of which, with the exception of rice, came from Persia. Wine was imported, but drunk secretly because it was contrary to the Muhammadan law. The drinking water was flavoured with pistachio nuts. Many of the people of Hormuz had gardens and farms on the mainland of Persia, and went there to pass some of the hot months of the year. All the water required by Hormuz itself had to be brought every day by boats from the mainland or from other islands. In the bazaars and markets were sold drugs, pepper, ginger, cinnamon, cloves, nutmegs, mace, long pepper, aloeswood, sandalwood, Brazil wood, balsam, tamarinds, saffron, beeswax, sugar, rice, coconuts, dates, raisins, and rhubarb; besides many horses from Arabia and Persia, which were exported

chiefly to India. Also quicksilver, pig iron, vermilion, rubies, sapphires, zircons or false diamonds, amethysts, topazes, crystallites, jacinths, turquoises, emeralds, and lapis lazuli; porcelain from Persia and China, rosewater from Persia and Mesopotamia, brocades and silkstuffs, and silk in skeins, scarlet woollens, camelot cloaks, and innumerable cotton stuffs, either in the piece or made up into caps and shirts; musk from Central Asia; seed pearls and large pearls from the islands of the Persian Gulf.

The people of Hormuz were wealthy, and well dressed in long white cotton shirts and full "Turkish" trousers of cotton, with additional overgarments of scarlet cloth or of rich silk or gauze. In their girdles they wore daggers and knives ornamented with gold and silver, and heavy short swords; and they carried long round shields and Turkish bows painted with gold and bright colours, and strung with silken cords. The very shields were garnished with silk, but the bows were businesslike, being made of stiff wood and buffalo's horn. The people were very good archers, and their slender arrows carried far. Others armed themselves with iron maces of exquisite workmanship, or battleaxes of good temper, but handsomely inlaid or enamelled. A good deal of money in gold and silver was coined in those days at Hormuz. The gold coins were called zarafi (usually alluded to in Portuguese or English literature of the period as seraphins). These gold and silver coins of Hormuz were circulated far and wide over India, and were practically the established currency of Southern Asia in the sixteenth century.

As already related, in 1507 Affonso d'Albuquerque made the first attempt to seize Hormuz for the Portuguese, and although he was only partially successful the island



agreed to pay tribute to the King of Portugal. But in 1514 the Portuguese built a "large and magnificent" fortress at Hormuz, and then intervened in the government of the place on behalf of the king; for the king's council was negotiating with Shah Ismail to add Hormuz to the Empire of Persia. The Portuguese viceroy arrived with a powerful fleet, and managed at an interview with the king to bring a large number of armed Portuguese with him. These he ordered suddenly to attack and stab to death the principal of the king's ministers. Afterwards war broke out between the king and his counsellors, but with the aid of the Portuguese the former was victorious. The King of Hormuz had then to accept a Portuguese garrison and become a vassal of the King of Portugal.

Barbosa found Shah Ismail ruling eastwards over Baluchistan and Sind, up to the frontiers of the kingdom of Cambay. He describes Gujarat as being under the rule of "Moors", that is to say, Muhammadans; but he realized that the majority of its inhabitants were still Hindus in race and religion, and notices the Rajputs or warrior caste, formerly the real governors of the country, and now constantly rebelling against the Afghan or Turkish invaders. Another prominent caste was that of the sacred Brahmans, who directed the Hindu religion of the country and administered the great temples, some of which were endowed with wealthy revenues, while others were maintained only by alms. Barbosa observed the reverence of the Brahmans for the idea of the Trinity. "They pay much honour to the number 3, and make their adoration to a triune god, whom they confess to be the true God, creator and maker of all things, three attributes in one sole person. But they also believe

in many other lesser gods governed by the Supreme Being."<sup>1</sup>

At this period the Portuguese found the Brahmans very well disposed toward's Christianity in its Roman form, declaring there was no great difference between the two religions. The Brahmans entered willingly into the churches established by the Portuguese, paying special reverence to the representations of the Virgin Mary. They wore round their shoulders the cotton thread com-

<sup>1</sup>The Trinity referred to was BRAHMA, sometimes called Parameswara, the Supreme God, almost overlooked or forgotten in modern Hinduism, SIVA or Shiva, and VISHNU. Vishnu seems in origin to have been a Dravidian god of the sun and of dark complexion: dark brown or dark blue. Siva, or Shiva, was a white, Aryan storm god, Rudra, or the Roarer, a god of destruction and yet of re-creation. Numerous gods and goddesses grew up out of the two lesser members of the Trinity. Siva and Vishnu were allotted in imagination heavenly wives who became goddesses. Their children, or even companions or servants, became minor deities. Thus one of the sons of Siva, by his goddess wife Parvati, was the elephant-headed god of wisdom, Ganesa (the subject of a very charming story by Mr. Rudyard Kipling); another was Skanda, a heavenly warrior or commander-in-chief with six heads! A third was Kama, the God of Love, who, for playfully shooting arrows of desire into the heart of his parent, Siva, when the latter was engaged in important business, was reduced to ashes by one glance from his father's third or middle eye, and therefore remains invisible ever since! Siva's favourite companion was a bull, who became the god Nandi.

Vishnu is sometimes represented as a black man with four arms; one hand holds a club, another a shell, the third a metal quoit, and the fourth a lotus (water lily). Vishnu frequently appeared on earth in the form (avatar) of some great hero or warrior, who in time became recognized or specialized as a new and separate god, such as Rama, the legendary Aryan hero who invaded Ceylon, and was helped by Hanuman the Monkey god; or Krishna, the beautiful youth, the heavenly cowherd; or Jagannatha (the "Lord of the World"—Juggernaut). There were also the earlier gods of Fire (Agni), of the Rain (Indra), of the Sea—once the Sky (Varuna). But the worship of these merged into the later conceptions of the Brahman Trinity and of the subsidiary relations and connections of Siva and Vishnu.

The goddesses of later Hinduism were, like many of the gods and demi-gods, more or less derived from the beliefs of the savage black aborigines of India; but they were ever and anon "accounted for", recognized by the Brahman priests as the wives or companions of Siva and Vishnu, and of their sons or their "avatars". The most famous of these Hindu goddesses was the wife of Siva, the "great goddess" (Mahadevi), the "mother of the world" (Jagan-matar), who in other aspects was a horror and a terror, Durga the unapproachable, Kali the black one, &c. To these forms of Siva's wife (of course independent goddesses taken over from the black forest tribes) bloody sacrifices were formally offered; and much drinking of wine and orgies of a disgusting nature took place at her festivals, abuses greatly modified or abolished during the last hundred years.

posed of three strands as a sign that they were Brahmins, twice born, and of sacred descent. They refused to eat anything which had been killed, or to kill anything themselves. As for the class of Banyans (Baniya), who were merchants and traders of the Vaisya caste (and possibly some of them of the Jain branch of the Buddhist faith), they were so opposed to killing anything that, besides refusing to eat meat, poultry, or fish, they would not even destroy the lice on their heads, or any other troublesome insects. If much worried by this vermin they would send for holy men, who removed the insects and transferred them to their own heads of hair! If these Banyans met an army of ants passing along the road, they would hastily seek out a side track for their passage, lest perchance they might tread on and kill one of these ants, and they would not light candles at night in case mosquitoes or moths should fly to the flame and perish. They therefore put their candles in lanterns made of paper or varnished calico. Their excessive sensitiveness on the subject of the sacredness of life was wont to be abused by the Muhammadans, who would bring them rats, birds, snakes, lizards, or even worms, which they made a feint of killing in their presence until they were ransomed by these rather ridiculous Hindus, who then set them at liberty. When a man was sentenced to death for a crime, the Banyans would unite together and buy him off; and Muhammadan beggars, when they wanted alms from these people, would take great stones and strike themselves on the body as though they were going to put an end to their lives. Then they would be hurriedly paid sums of money not to do so, but to go away in peace.

Yet Barbosa describes them as being great usurers and falsifiers of weights and measures, given to adulterating

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their merchandise and clipping and debasing their coins; they were also very untruthful. In short, they exhibited, as do some of their descendants and fellow countrymen at the present day, an example of religion gone mad. An appreciation of the beauty of the many forms of life around them, and a desire to avoid as far as possible the killing of harmless beasts and birds, led to their adopting a very restricted diet of milk, butter, sugar, vegetables, and fruits, which deprived them often of the necessary vigour with which to defend their country against invaders; while their tolerance of poisonous snakes and of innumerable harmful insects led to great loss of human life and to the spread of diseases of all kinds. They committed sins just like non-Hindus, but believed themselves to be easily pardoned for these by bathing twice a day. Yet they were very charitable, and reverently kind to their parents.

As to the great city of Cambay, Barbosa describes its handsome houses of stone and whitewashed clay, very lofty, with windows, set in streets and squares amidst orchards and groves. The inhabitants included many workmen and mechanics, who spun cloths of white cotton, fine and coarse, and fabrics of silk and velvet; who carved ivory, and were experts with the turning lathe, making bedsteads, chessmen, and beads of large size—brown, yellow, and blue. They cut precious stones, and were experts in fabricating sham jewellery and imitation pearls. They were exquisite silversmiths, and their women produced very beautiful needlework. The Hindus of Cambay were exceedingly cleanly people, washing frequently and delighting to perfume their bodies and hair, and to wear in their hair—both men and women—jessamine and other flowers. They were fond of music, played on various kinds of instruments, and indulged in much

singing. When they travelled about the city it was in carts drawn by oxen or horses, and these carts were filled with rich mattresses, and were closed like our broughams and shut carriages, and supplied with windows. In their houses the Cambayans liked to make collections of porcelain, which they kept in well-arranged glass cupboards.

After describing the coast of Dekkan and the Island of Goa (which afterwards became a peninsula), Barbosa reached the coast of the great Hindu kingdom of the Narsinga,<sup>1</sup> otherwise Vijayanagar. About this he has much to say which is of interest. At the town of Batikala—which exported very good white rice and sugar in powder, iron, and myrobalans—there was a mania for duelling on account of the great sensitiveness as to their honour felt by the warrior caste (the Naïrs). The ruler of Vijayanagar at this time rather encouraged duelling than otherwise, and when he heard that one man had challenged another, or that a number of people had exchanged challenges, he appointed a day, arranged a place for the fight, and gave each duellist seconds to support and encourage him. The fighters were naked from the waist upwards, but from the middle of the body down to their feet they were wrapped in cotton cloths wound tightly round them with many folds. They were armed with a sword, a dagger, and a shield, and after saying prayers they entered the lists, and usually one killed the other in a very short space of time, both fighters, however, maintaining absolute silence.

Barbosa describes the lofty, precipitous mountain range which lies between the narrow, flat coast tract and the interior of the great kingdom of the Narsinga, how these

<sup>1</sup> Apparently a title of the Maharaja or Great King, which is written by later authorities Narsinha. Vijayanagar lasted as a Hindu empire over Southern India from 1118 to 1565.

mountains were clothed with forests and watered with innumerable streams, and how they sheltered many fierce, wild beasts, and especially "animals of an ashy colour which look like horses, are very active, and cannot be caught", by which he means the large Nilgai antelope.<sup>1</sup> When the mountain range was traversed the traveller entered on a fertile district of plains and much cultivation, with abundant cattle, buffaloes, pigs, goats, sheep, asses, and diminutive ponies. The capital of the great kingdom of the Narsinga—Vijáyanagar—he describes as having thatched houses, but broad streets and squares, filled with an innumerable crowd of all nations and creeds, with numerous courts in which are pools of water containing plenty of fish, with gardens of shrubs, flowers, and sweet-smelling herbs. "There is an infinite trade in this city and strict justice and truth are observed towards all by the governors of the country." People came from all parts of the Old World to trade and reside in Vijáyanagar. The natives of the place wore silks and brocades brought in the way of commerce from China and Alexandria, much scarlet cloth, and coral beads. It was a great centre for the jewel trade. The region actually ruled by the Narsinga produced diamonds, and others were brought thither from Golkonda, while there were pearls from both the Persian Gulf and Ceylon. There was a gold coinage.

The king, his courtiers, and most of the citizens were Hindus (not Muhammadans), of nearly white complexion, with long and very smooth black hair; well proportioned, their features like those of Europeans. They bathed every day, and after bathing anointed themselves with rose-

<sup>1</sup> *Boselaphus tragovamelus*. The Nilgai—the name means "blue cow"—is related to the Elands, Kudus, and Bushbucks of Africa, and perhaps very distantly to the ancestral oxen.

water, sandalwood, musk, and other perfumes. The king dispensed not only favours but punishments to his relations, his ministers, and his courtiers. When any wrong was done by these personages they were summoned to the monarch's presence, and had to come immediately, though they might be carried there in very richly decorated litters on men's shoulders, with their horses led by the bridle before them, and accompanied by many servants on horseback. They descended at the door of the palace, and waited there with their trumpets and musical instruments until the king's pleasure was known. When they came to his presence they were interrogated as to the charge brought against them, and unless able to show themselves innocent they were stripped and thrown on the ground, and if of great rank were scourged by the king himself. After they had been well whipped the king presented them with rich garments to cover their smarting bodies, and then had them reconducted to their litters and their attendants, who bore them away with a great clang of musical instruments and much festivity to their own homes.

In the king's stables were kept nine hundred elephants and more than twenty thousand horses. The elephants had cost the king between £700 and £1000 each (in our money).

The Narsinga's kitchens were large and numerous, and contained many cauldrons of copper, and several officials who cooked the food of the elephants and horses. Barbosa also describes the elaborate arrangements by which these elephants and twenty thousand horses were distributed amongst the courtiers, officials, and gentry, so that they were maintained at the king's expense and held at his service, but used for the time being by those who kept them. The horses, however (as is pointed out by all

writers of this period), seldom lived long and do not seem to have bred much in the country, but always had to be recruited from the Persian Gulf or from Northern India.

As to the soldiers, when they were enrolled an exact description would be given of their bodily peculiarities, and their height would be measured, and all set down in writing, together with the home of the recruit, and the names of his father and mother. But these precautions were taken less with a desire to see that the man's pay reached his relations after his death, than in order to check desertion.

There was complete religious tolerance at this time in the kingdom of the Narsinga for Muhammadans, Hindus, and Christians alike. But amongst the Hindus the abominable practice of the widows being obliged to throw themselves into the fire after their husband's death persisted in full force. As this was the fate of almost all widows, it is hardly to be wondered at that a considerable proportion of the young women preferred not to marry, but to give themselves up to the service of the temples and to become "nautch"<sup>1</sup> or dancing girls. When the Narsinga himself died four or five hundred women would be burnt with him in a great pit, together with abundance of scented woods, oil, and butter; but in these great funerals not only the wives and concubines of the great monarch perished in this manner, but even some of his special men friends and confidants.

Amongst the Brahmans who only married one wife it was customary for the widow to be buried alive instead of burnt. A grave was dug for her rather deeper than her height, and she was put into it standing. The earth was then thrown in all round her and above her head.

<sup>1</sup> This word should really be spelt and pronounced nāchh.



Some large stones were put on the top of the whole, and in this manner the woman died of suffocation. Yet, in spite of this, women fell in love and desired to marry some particular man, and if they feared this union could not otherwise be brought about, they made a vow to one of the gods to render its idol or representative a great service if their wish was granted and they married the man they fancied. Accordingly, when and if the wish was granted, the young bride and her husband appointed a day for the fulfilment of the vow, and on it the bride would proceed in a large ox cart to the temple, accompanied with great honour by all her relations and friends, with much singing and playing on instruments, and professional dancers and jesters. The bride came wrapped very tightly round the middle of her body with rolls of white calico. Inside the ox wagon were fixed a tall crane, from which depended a chain with two iron hooks. When the woman was ready to start, the chain and hooks were lowered from the crane inside the cart and the hooks were forced into the skin of her back. The crane was then hoisted with the woman suspended from the hooks in the manner described. In one hand she had to hold a bag with lemons and oranges, and then as the cart began to move on its way to the temple, the young woman, in spite of the pain she was enduring, and the streams of blood running down her legs, had to sing and shout for joy, to strike upon a shield which she held in her left hand, and to throw oranges and lemons to her husband and his relations. Arrived at the temple, she was lowered to the ground, the hooks removed from her flesh, and ointments and medicines applied to her. She was then delivered back to her husband and returned to her home after giving alms to the priests, and offerings to the idols.

Barbosa also describes the laws of succession among the Hindu kings of Southern India—laws which have been found to exist in many parts of Africa as well. A king is not succeeded by any son whom he may have from one of his numerous wives, but by one of his brothers, or, more often, a nephew who is a son of one of the king's sisters. Thus, if a woman, the sister of a king, gave birth to three or four sons and two or three daughters, the first son would be king and would be succeeded, if they lived, by each of his brothers in turn, and when the brothers were dead, by the son of the eldest sister, who in turn would be followed by any of his brothers, and they again would be succeeded by the sons of the other sisters of the first king.

Barbosa noted that the Zamorin or Raja of Calicut kept many clerks constantly in his palace in one great room, where they wrote down a record of the king's revenue, of the money and goods which he gave away as alms, and of the pay which was made to his soldiers and servants. They also recorded the complaints presented to the king, and checked the accounts of the collectors of taxes. The substance on which they wrote was the broad, stiff leaf of a palm tree. They used no ink, but a sharp iron pen, with which they incised their letters on the whitish rind of the palm leaf. The leaves when finished were tied up into bundles. Sometimes a blank leaf would be signed by the king, so that a clerk could afterwards go away and write the necessary order over his signature. He describes these clerks as persons of great credit, old and respectable, who when they arose in the morning, and before they began writing on business, would cut a small piece off a leaf, write the name of one or more Hindu gods on it, and then pay worship to the god with uplifted hands

and looking towards the sun. After their prayers were done they would throw away this piece of written leaf and go about their business.

This Raja of Calicut maintained at his court a thousand waiting-women, who received regular pay, and whose business it was to sweep the palaces and houses of the Raja. Fifty such women, says Barbosa, would have been enough, but the Zamorin, on account of his high position, felt it necessary to maintain a thousand, all of good family. These nobly born charwomen each arrived at the palace daily with a broom and a large brass dish containing a mixture of cow dung and water. After having swept the palace with another brush, they would distribute a thin coating of this fluid over all the floors and benches, or spurt it over the road along which the Raja would have to pass. This process, which still goes on in many parts of India, is far more wholesome than might appear, imparting as it does a not disagreeable smell of hay to the dwellings, and being a famous insectifuge, driving away flies and other obnoxious insects.

When the Raja of Calicut, or any other great Hindu prince of Southern India at that day, was ready for a meal, he would probably begin by chewing betel leaf,<sup>1</sup> each leaf having first been smeared with a little lime made of sea-shells, diluted with rosewater. At the same time he would chew a piece of the nut of the Areca palm. This, together with the betel leaf, would stain his saliva almost the colour of blood, but from time to time he would wash out his mouth with water from a gold cup, and also eject the juice of the betel and the Areca nut, such, at least, as he did not swallow. After this he bathed in a pool of clean water in the palace, at the same time worshipping

<sup>1</sup> A species of pepper vine, see p. 76.

his gods by walking three times round the pool and bowing each time to the east, and plunging three times under water. Then he dressed in clean clothes and proceeded to the place where the meal was got ready. To eat it he would sit on the ground or on a very low round seat. His attendants brought a large silver tray on which were placed many silver saucers, all empty. Another round low stand was placed before him, and on this the cook, who must be of the Brahman caste, would place a copper pot of cooked rice. The rice had to be very dry and each grain separate and distinct. Then the attendants would make a pile of rice on the silver tray, and into each of the silver saucers would put curried meats, chutneys, and sauces. The Raja must begin to eat with the right hand, taking handfuls of rice without any spoon, and with the same hand he must take something out of each dish and mix it with the rice, not using his left hand in any way to touch what he was going to eat. But with his left hand he might raise to his mouth a silver pitcher of drinking-water, only he must not drink out of this pitcher directly, but project the water in a stream into his open mouth. Until he had completely finished eating he must not wash his right hand. Having finished his repast the Raja would return to his dais and cushions and once again commence chewing betel leaves.

Besides the caste of Brahmans or priests in Southern India (who only married one wife, and only allowed the eldest son of the family to be regularly married, and to be the heir of all the property) there was the warrior caste of the Nairs.<sup>1</sup> No one could be a Nair or warrior

<sup>1</sup> Practically equivalent to the Aryan Kshatriyas and Rajputs; but the Nairs of Southern India were really a warlike aboriginal tribe which had forced themselves to be recognized as a "twice-born" caste.

who was not of good family, and proved noble descent, the descent being through the women. When a Nair boy was seven years of age he was sent to school to learn gymnastics and the use of weapons. First he was taught to dance, and then to perform 'acrobatic movements so as to render his body and limbs thoroughly supple. When he had reached manhood he usually enlisted in the service of the king, or some great minister or noble, from whom he received pay. The Nairs or warriors usually lived outside the towns, separate from other people, or on their own estates. They did not drink wine, and wherever they went they shouted at intervals, so as to warn the peasants and other low-caste people to get out of their way. If any peasant placed himself in the path of a Nair the latter could kill him without penalty. If a peasant were by misfortune to touch a Nair lady, her relations would immediately kill her *and* the peasant *and* all the peasant's relations! And even if a Nair in ordering work to be done by peasants, or in buying anything, should accidentally touch the peasant, he could not re-enter his own house without first washing himself and then changing into clean clothes. No Nair women, without incurring the penalty of death, could enter any great town except once a year. On one night out of the three hundred and sixty-five they might go where they liked with their men relations, and on such occasions the towns would be lit up, and the inhabitants do these women all possible honour, decorating the streets with handsome cloths. The Nair women were frequently obliged to go through ceremonial washings, bathing first in hot water, and then dressing in clean clothes, and then going out of their house to a pool of cold water, and bathing again and getting into fresh clean clothes, and then bathing

a third time and once more dressing again in clean clothes.

The fastidious cleanliness which one meets with all through the accounts of these religious and social rites and ceremonies, and which is still, though not to such an exaggerated extent, characteristic of Hindu India, no doubt acted beneficially for many centuries after the invasion of India by the white races, in keeping them free from disease. But, like everything else in Hindu religion and customs, this ceremonial purity was carried to a ridiculous extreme, wasting an enormous amount of time, and of course placing the Hindu aristocracy very much at the mercy of rough-and-ready Muhammadan and Christian peoples, who were not only able to invade and conquer India with the greatest ease, but who have been able ever since to rule it for its own good, because some two hundred millions of Hindus carried to a ridiculous extreme many excellent ideas and practices.

In addition to the two superior castes already mentioned, there was the merchant caste<sup>1</sup> throughout Southern India, who were "twice born" and far superior to the peasants because they were able to touch Brahmans and Nair warriors without conferring defilement. The merchants occupied a privileged position and might not be sentenced to death by the king, but only by a council of merchants assembled to try them. In this caste it was the rule to marry only one wife, and for a man to be succeeded by his sons. After death their bodies were burnt, but their wives, though condemned to perpetual widowhood, were not obliged to destroy themselves.

Barbosa goes on to describe the other castes (of the "once-born"—Sudras—the potters and workers of clay,

<sup>1</sup> Equivalent to the Vaisya or original Aryan husbandmen.  
(c 406)

the washermen, the weavers, the agricultural labourers, the mariners and fishermen, the makers of hats and shields (who were also astrologers, fortune-tellers, and weather prophets), the quarrymen, carpenters, blacksmiths, and silversmiths, the saltmakers, and rice-growers, the hunters, and practisers of low witchcraft, and finally the miserable, naked, negroid bush tribes living on roots and wild fruits and such beasts and birds as they could kill in the woods.

There were also castes and communities of merchants from Bengal and Eastern India, or from Cambay and Gujarat; and he notes the presence of Parsis<sup>1</sup> and Arabs, and, above all, of a warlike Muhammadan people called Mapuler—the modern Mopla—who carried on nearly all the trade of the seaports round the south coast of India, and who were no doubt derived from the earliest Arab settlers on the coast.

Barbosa probably visited the Maldivé Islands, otherwise he could not have described so accurately the large sailing ships made of split coconut palm trunks fastened together with matting, and the small rowing boats, "very pretty and good for rowing", which were used to go from one island to another in this archipelago—an archipelago that includes hundreds, if not thousands, of low coral islands, islets, and rocks. These Maldivé Islands had been already settled with a mixed race of Arabs, Hindus, and Malays; the last-named, perhaps, the ancestors of the bold Sumatra sea rovers who colonized Madagaskar. The King of the Maldives was elected by a committee of Arab merchants residing at Kannanor on the opposite coast. The ships which came to trade at the Maldives carried

<sup>1</sup> The Parsis, now such an important and highly educated class in India—merchants, bankers, and tradesmen—were originally Persians who fled to India when the Arabs conquered Persia about 640 A.D. They still practise the religion of Zoroaster, and number about one hundred thousand.

away as ballast quantities of kauri shells, which were then used as a currency, not only in many parts of India, but were being sent over to East Africa for the same purpose. Thus from Southern India the kauri shells penetrated right across the African continent to the west coast. Another article of trade in the Maldives, besides the beautiful cotton and silk goods that were manufactured by the natives, was ambergris, white, grey, and brown. Barbosa was much puzzled by this substance, which he calls amber. The Muhammadan merchants told him it was derived from the guano of sea birds deposited on rocks near the sea, and that every night in stormy weather the waves dislodged fragments of this guano, which then floated out to sea. But, as a matter of fact, ambergris is the undigested parts of cuttlefish that are swallowed in such enormous quantities by sperm whales. Ejected from the body of the whale, this ambergris floats on the waves, and is cast up on the shores of tropical seas. It has a strong and agreeable odour, and is used to manufacture perfumes and drugs.

Barbosa visited Ceylon, Bengal, Burma, and the great Malay Islands, but as his description does not differ much from that of preceding travellers, it is not necessary to repeat it here. He extended his voyages to China and the Liukiu Islands before he returned to Spain in about 1517. He seems to have sailed with his still more celebrated cousin, Magalhaës (Magellan) in 1519, on that first attempt to circumnavigate the Globe, and to have died on the voyage.



## CHAPTER VII

### English Merchants come to India

The sixteenth century was a very momentous hundred years for India and Southern Asia. It saw the arrival of the Portuguese in force to take possession of many points on the western and southern coasts of India, the Island of Ceylon, the Malay Peninsula, and some of the Malay Islands. It witnessed between 1526 and 1594 the welding of the different Muhammadan states and kingdoms of North and Central India—mostly founded by Afghan soldiers and adventurers—into a great Muhammadan empire under the supremacy of the Mughals or Mongols<sup>1</sup> from Western Asia. The sixth in descent from Timur, Bábar (whose name meant “the lion”) rose from being a petty king of Ferghana, in Turkestan, to becoming the ruler of Samarkand and of Afghanistan, and at the time of his death, in 1530, at Agra, he had extended his empire from the heart of Central Asia to the Ganges and the vicinity of Calcutta. Bábar's son, Humayūn, reigned for twenty-six years, but during much of that time was a fugitive, owing to the revolt of the Afghan princes and rulers of Bengal and North Central India. His power was regained for him, however, by his wonderful son, Akbar, who was the real founder of the Mughal Empire.

<sup>1</sup> The root word is really Mongol, but owing to the deficiency of the Arabic alphabet in certain vowels and consonants it could only be written “M<sup>g</sup>ghal”, a word thus pronounced—the *g*<sup>h</sup> being a strong guttural—in India, and rendered in European languages Mogul or Mogor.

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and who ruled over Afghanistan, Kashmir, and all India except Assam, the Dekkan, and the Karnatik.

Whilst this consolidated power was arising in the Far East, a kingdom, remote from it by some 4500 miles, in the Far North-west was building up a remarkable sea power, and becoming inspired by a spirit of adventure as daring, as reckless, as all-attempting as that of the Spaniards and the Portuguese. This was England under Elizabeth. The foundations of England's greatness as an imperial power had been laid by the last but one of her Plantagenet rulers, Edward IV, when he brought her into close relations with the remarkable civilization and culture of the Netherlands on the one hand and the oversea adventure of Portugal on the other. Still more was this movement increased under the first two Tudor kings, who, whatever may have been their defects in policy or personality, conceived great views of oversea commerce. But Elizabeth, both personally and through her ministers and sea captains, openly laid the foundations of that empire, which was built up afterwards—to a degree for which they have never received sufficient credit—by James I, Charles I, Cromwell, and, above all, Charles II.

In the first half of the sixteenth century, Francis I of France scandalized the Christian world of Europe by concluding a pact, a half-hearted alliance, with the Sultan of Turkey, who, by his conquest of Egypt and Algiers, had become supreme lord over the western half of the Muhammadan world. This was done as a means of coping with the octopus power of Spain-Germany-Hungary-and-Italy, united in the person of the Emperor Charles V. Through this action the French were able to obtain a foothold, which they never completely abandoned, on the north coast of Africa, and opened trading stations in Egypt and

the Levant. Elizabeth, no doubt, had this example in view when, likewise with the idea of strengthening her kingdom against the assaults of Spain, she entered into friendly relations with Sultan Murad III of Turkey, in the year 1580-1.<sup>1</sup>

These friendly relations led to the establishment or re-establishment of the privileged Levant or Turkey Company, with its trading agencies and consuls on the islands and coasts of the Ottoman dominions, notably at Tripolis and Beirut on the Syrian coast, and at Aleppo, farther north. This commerce with the Turkish Empire had begun as far back as the reign of Henry VII, but it was placed on a secure footing by Elizabeth's treaty with Murad III, in 1581.

The English people, whose general education had so mightily improved under the schools established by Edward VI's Government, had begun to take a keen interest in the marvels of India by the translations of various Portuguese and Italian travels which were issued in England during the early part of Elizabeth's reign, and this interest was further stimulated by the letters received from Father Thomas Stevens, an English Jesuit, who went out to Goa as a missionary in a ship of the Portuguese fleet in 1579. THOMAS STEVENS was born in Wiltshire about 1550 and apparently studied at Oxford, taking a degree there in 1577. He retained the Roman Catholic faith, in which he had been born and brought up, during the reign of Mary I. When the intrigues of Spain and the needs of her policy drove Elizabeth to take up a hostile attitude towards those of her subjects who remained distinctly "Roman" Catholic, Stevens withdrew to Rome and joined the Jesuits. He was stationed princ-

<sup>1</sup> She had sent an envoy to the Sufi Shah of Persia in 1561 or 1562.



THE VICEROY ALBUQUERQUE



THE EMPEROR AKBAR



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pally at Goa, where he died in 1619; and there he exerted himself with the truest Christianity, not only on behalf of the natives, whose languages he acquired for the purpose of translating works on religion, but in reference to all unfortunate strangers, English, Dutch, or French, who were stranded at Goa and cast into Portuguese prisons: for the Portuguese were intensely jealous of any interference with their monopoly of Indian commerce and empire.

Stevens's letters home to his father may have come under the eyes of London merchants interested in the Levant trade, and provoked a desire for commercial relations with India; but it is much more likely that the real incentive to adventure in the Far East came from the merchants themselves, who, even before the Anglo-Turkish Alliance and the grant of special charters, had, between 1570 and 1580, begun to cross from Tripolis (in Syria) and Aleppo to the Euphrates, and thence through Mesopotamia to the Persian Gulf, and even as far as Hormuz. The result of these seekings after India was the decision of Elizabeth to grant a new charter in 1586 to the Levant Company, whose headquarters were established at Aleppo, and to address letters to the Emperor Akbar and to the King of China, and to send as her representative, bearing these letters, JOHN NEWBERY, a member of the Levant Company. Newbery, who had already been at Hormuz on a previous journey, took with him another London merchant, RALPH FITCH, a jeweller, WILLIAM LEEDES, and an artist, JAMES STOREY.

This little company, together with other merchant adventurers, left London in a ship called the *Tyger*, and sailed through the Mediterranean to Tripolis in Syria. From this point they made their way overland to Aleppo,

thence travelled by means of camels across the desert to Birejik on the Euphrates, and descended the Euphrates in a boat to a place called Feluja. From Feluja they made their way in one day by canal to Baghdad, which the English at that time usually called "Babylon". From Baghdad they passed on by boat to Basrah. On the way they noticed the many islands of the Shat or joint delta of the Euphrates and Tigris, which islands the Turks had been (and still are) quite unable to subdue to their government. Their inhabitants were described by the English travellers as nomadic thieves moving about from place to place with their camels, goats, wives, and children. They were dressed in large blue gowns, the ears and noses of their wives being ringed with rings of copper and silver, and their legs likewise decorated with rings of copper. Probably these people were, in Fitch's time, mainly derived from the Arabs of the adjoining desert, but formerly, in the ninth century A.D., they were an "Indian" tribe, the ancestors of the modern Gipsies. The Gipsies, though they have long been a very mixed stock of vagrant peoples, still by their language and their principal origin belong to the Aryan peoples of Western Asia and North-west India. They originated in or near Afghanistan, and entered Persia during the fourth century of the Christian era. Some of them crossed Persia into Armenia and Asia Minor, whence they proceeded to Eastern and Central Europe. Others were driven by the Persians into Southern Mesopotamia, where they were allowed to take up their abode on the reedy shores and innumerable islands of the lake-like delta of the Euphrates-Tigris, a region which was also infested, then and now, with lions and wild boars. But the Gipsies left this marshy land about 833, and by their thieving and raiding incurred the

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wrath of the settled government of the Abbasid Caliphs. An Arab general, Ojeif bin Anbasa, "rounded them up", and sent them to Bagdad, whence they were escorted, not without honour, to the Byzantine frontier in Asia Minor. They called themselves sometimes the people of Little Egypt (Egyptians, Gipsies), because the Euphrates delta was sometimes known in those times as "Little Egypt".

At Basrah, Fitch's party embarked in a ship constructed of boards sewed together with the coir or thread made of coconut husks, a very leaky type of vessel, which nevertheless did not seem particularly dangerous on the placid waters of the Persian Gulf. On arriving at Hormuz they found the island, of course, dominated by the Portuguese, who, at the instigation of the jealous Venetian merchants, seized the English travellers, put them in prison, and took part of their goods from them. Nevertheless, they were sent by the Portuguese governor to Goa, calling on the way at Diu Island, at Daman, Bassein, Tana (near Bombay), and Chaul. Here they seem to have made a short halt. Chaul was situated on an inlet of the sea, south of Bombay Island, and then consisted of two towns, one belonging to the Portuguese and the other to the Muhammadan Indians. Here Fitch was much impressed by the Palmyra or talipot palm, which was "the profitablest tree in the world", for from its sap was made much sugar and delicious wine; its nuts yielded oil;<sup>1</sup> the fermented sap became vinegar; while the fibre, bark, leaves, and wood made ropes, mats, baskets, thatch for the houses, sails for the ships, brooms for sweeping, timber for shipbuilding, and charcoal for cooking. The wine-

<sup>1</sup> Fitch evidently mixed up the Palmyra or Fan palm (*Borassus*) with the Wild Date (*Phoenix sylvestris*) and the Coconut. The nuts of the *Borassus* do not yield oil, and the sugar (jaggari) derived from its sap is not as abundant as that from the Wild Date palm.



making sap was drawn from the top of the tree. Below an incision made at the base of the fronds they attached an earthen pot to catch the sap. This was emptied every morning and evening. A portion of it was distilled (mixed with dried raisins) and became an ardent spirit.<sup>1</sup>

Upon the ship's arrival at Goa the travellers were cast into prison, and remained there for over a month, until through the intercession of Father Stevens and another Jesuit they were released upon security being found for 2000 ducats (about £1000). They then demanded their goods and money from the Viceroy, since he now held surety for their good behaviour, but he made them "a very sharp answer", saying that they would before long be again examined as to their intentions. Apparently their plans had been laid with considerable cunning. They arrived at Hormuz with a cargo of valuable goods and plenty of money. Indeed, their setting up shop and trading in jewels had at this place aroused the jealousy of the Venetian and other Italian merchants (who apparently were still allowed to frequent the trading depots of the East by the Portuguese), and it was the jealous interference of these Italians that had caused the English travellers to be arrested by the Portuguese and sent to Goa. But the three Englishmen, or at any rate two of them, Fitch and Newbery, had concealed about their persons, or in some other way, greater wealth in money, negotiable bills, and jewels (about £600 in all) than the value of their trade goods and cash which had been taken from them by the Portuguese. When they realized, therefore, that it was hopeless to expect justice from the Portuguese, and that they were even in danger of torture, imprison-

<sup>1</sup> This was evidently the "artificial wine" or "mixed wine" of the early Portuguese and English travellers.

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ment, and eventual death or forced return to Portugal, they resolved to escape from Goa and trust themselves to the tender mercies of the natives of India, Muhammadan and Hindu. The Jesuits had got them out of prison, but apparently with the further intention of inducing them to join their order, to which end they worked much on their feelings and fears. They succeeded in detaching from the party the artist, James Storey, who agreed to remain with the Jesuits. This, indeed, he did for some time afterwards, but finally left them (apparently without ill will on their part), married a half-caste Portuguese woman, and set up a shop, where he did a good trade in paintings. He seems to have lived long, and to have ended his days at Goa unmolested.

There was between 1580 and 1640 a special hostility shown towards the English in India by the Portuguese, which was not merely connected with a religious dislike to possible Protestants. It arose from the fact that during this period the Portuguese crown was united with that of Spain, and that England and Spain were frequently at war with one another.

On Sunday, April 5, 1585, Newbery, Fitch, and Leedes left their shop in Goa in charge of a Dutch boy. They started for a place called Bardes, where the then Island of Goa was separated from the mainland by a narrow, fordable stream. Here they made as if to picnic, but with the aid of the Indian guide crossed the stream to the mainland beyond, which was no longer under the control of the Portuguese. They then rapidly travelled across country to Belgaum, where there was a great market for diamonds, rubies, sapphires, and other precious stones. Thence they passed through the kingdom of Golkonda. The weather was very hot; but without any

misadventures, through kindly, peaceable countries governed by Muhammadan kings, they made their way across India to the port of Masulipatam on the Gulf of Bengal. From this point they travelled northwards through Berar and the central provinces to the north-western parts of India, more directly under the government of the great Mughal Emperor, Akbar. In some of the Hindu regions of Central India they noticed the child marriages, namely, the practice of marrying boys when they were between eight and ten to girls only five or six years old, a custom which was in reality rather more a betrothal than a marriage, as the children were afterwards withdrawn to their parents' keeping until they were of marriageable age. The excuse given to these English pioneers was that, as in all Hindu countries the widow would have to be burnt immediately after her husband's death, it was advisable they should marry as young as possible, so that in case there were children the father of the bridegroom might be able, in the event of his son's death (which would be followed by that of the young widow), to be still of an age and position to look after and bring up his grandchildren!

On their way north towards Agra and Delhi they stayed at the remarkable town of Mandoway or Mandu (now deserted), which was situated nearly 2000 feet above sea level, on a crest of the Vindhya Mountains [the Vindhyas being really on the northern edge of ancient India, when a broad gulf of water separated Peninsular India from the Himalayas]. Before them lay the country of the Plains traversed by many great affluents of the Ganges. They passed through Gwalior and Rajputana, and reached Agra after wading and swimming across many swollen rivers.

Agra was really the capital of Akbar—the Great Mogor,

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as Fitch styles him. It was a city built mainly of stone even then, and very populous, on the banks of the beautiful River Jamna. But the king's court and actual residence were at Fatehpur-Sikri, about 12 miles to the north-east. The road between the two cities was all the way a veritable market of food and merchandise, "as though a man was still in a town". The people drove handsome two-wheeled carts, carved and gilded, and drawn by miniature bulls, very swift as trotters, but scarcely larger than very big dogs. Both Agra and Fatehpur appeared to Newbery to be much larger and more populous than the London of his day, and they were probably far more comfortable and luxurious to live in. The great Mughal Emperor was credibly reported to keep in his stables and parks one thousand elephants, thirty thousand horses, one thousand four hundred tamed deer, and a wonderful menagerie of tigers, leopards, buffaloes, hawks, pheasants, and other birds. His private apartments housed eight hundred women—wives and attendants; yet the great king seems to have been easy of access to these envoys from Queen Elizabeth, and to have been simply apparelled (when they saw him) in a long white garment "made like a shirt, tied with strings on one side", and a little cloth or turban on his head, of red or yellow. In the pictures of the day by Persian artists he has a somewhat Persian face, with regular features, a light, yellowish-white complexion, a twirled moustache, either white with age or bleached with henna. He wears very large ear-rings of pearls and rubies, has a few fine jewels in the light turban over his forehead, and necklaces of pearls and rubies.

At Fatehpur-Sikri the three travellers remained together for about three months, or until 28th September, 1585. Then John Newbery started for Lahor, intending to travel

thence to Persia, and so reach Aleppo and Constantinople. Before going, he directed Ralph Fitch to visit Bengal and Burma (Pegu), promising him that, if it pleased God, they would meet again in Bengal within two years, for Newbery would return to India in a ship round the Cape of Good Hope. As to William Leedes, the jeweller, he was taken into the service of the Great Mughal at Fatehpur. He was given a house, five slaves, and a horse, and a handsome salary paid to him daily in money. Very likely he married a native wife, and lost all inclination to return to England. At any rate William Leedes is not heard of again. Nor, indeed, was John Newbery, who seems to have reached Lahor, but thenceforth disappeared, having been, it is supposed, murdered, on the journey between there and Persia.

As to Ralph Fitch, his journey to Bengal was quite a safe and comfortable one, for he had only to embark on a boat at Agra and sail or row down the Jamna into the Ganges. His boat was one of a little fleet of one hundred and eighty similar vessels, mostly laden with salt, opium, indigo, lead, carpets, and other commodities, which Muhammadan and Hindu merchants were taking for sale in Bengal. As he journeyed down these great rivers he passed a panorama of the most varied interest and beauty: swarms of people and swarms of wild birds—immense cranes, Chinese geese, pelicans (which Fitch mistook for swans), adjutant storks, ibises, and flamingoes; waterside temples with strange and fantastic idols of stone or painted wood—some like lions, tigers, monkeys, or peacocks, others like men and women, and some which could only be compared to devils with four arms sitting cross-legged. The fields by the river banks were full of partridges and turtle doves, and at nighttime visited by tigers; the towns

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and marketplaces were patrolled by strange, naked, long-haired beggars. Fitch was perhaps most of all struck with the Brahmans or Hindu priests. These wore the sacred three-stranded string about their necks, and would come down to the waterside, and after ladling up water with both their hands, would turn this string firstly with both their hands inside, and then with the arms outside. They would pray in the water naked, and then for a penance lie flat upon the earth and turn themselves from thirty to forty times, raise their hands to the sun, and then kiss the earth, with their arms and legs stretched out, and with their right leg always before the left. Every time they lay down after these motions they made a score on the ground to check the number of times they had performed them. They must also be naked when they cooked their food, so as to run less risk of defilement and to make it easier to wash. The food, of course, must consist of rice and milk and fruits, without the meat of any animal. They were wont to mark their foreheads, ears, and throats with a yellow paste. He further describes them as "a kind of crafty people, worse than the Jews".

At Benares (which he spells much more in accord with the actual pronunciation, Bannares) he notices the pilgrims that come from a distance to worship the river or the gods connected with the Ganges. By the side of the river there would be old men of a religious life sitting praying upon places of bare earth with baskets of straw by their side. To each of the pilgrims they would give three or four straws, which they were to hold between their fingers when they washed in the river water. Or some of these old men would apply themselves to marking pilgrims on ~~the forehead~~ with a sanctified paste. For these services the pilgrims would tender small offerings in grain or

money, and the old men would then (when the pilgrims had duly sacrificed to the idols) offer up prayers on their behalf. Alongside some of these images or idols with hideous clawed hands, were stone tanks, the water of which was stagnant, and absolutely stank with the quantity of rotting flowers thrown into it by the pilgrims as offerings to the gods. Stone steps led down to the waterside of the temple tanks, and the foulness of the water, no doubt, was added to by the constant washing in it which went on on behalf of the pilgrims, who bathed there in the belief that their sins would thus be forgiven, and who would take away the sand or mud at the bottom of the tank on account of its sanctity. According to Fitch they were unable to pray except they first stood in the water and poured water over their heads and drank a little of the water. It was, of course, through practices like these that diseases such as cholera originated and were spread far and wide over India.

In the temples in warm weather devotees would sit by the side of the idols fanning them, so that the gods might keep cool. Amongst the idols was one of which they made great account, for they would say of it, this one gave them all things, both food and clothes, therefore by the side of this god must always remain in turns an attendant to keep fanning it with cool air.

At Patna, Fitch saw "a dissembling prophet which sat upon a horse in the marketplace and made as though he slept, and many of the people came and touched his feet with their hands, and then kissed their hands. They took him for a great man, but sure he was a lazy lubber. I left him there sleeping. The people of these countries be much given to such prating and dissembling hypocrites." But at Patna he also noticed people who were digging for

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gold. They dug deep pits in the earth, and washed the clay and gravel in great bowls, thus washing out the gold dust and tiny nuggets.

From Bengal, Fitch made a twenty-five days' journey northward into the country of Kuch Behar.<sup>1</sup> Here he notices there were no more Muhammadans, the people being either Hindu or Buddhist. Kuch Behar seems to have had a greater extent in those days as an independent state than it has now, and to have been in close touch with the commerce of Indo-China. The ordinary means of access to its frontier were defended against Muhammadan incursions by sharply pointed bamboo stakes being driven to a certain distance into the ground on most of the routes approaching Kuch Behar. In addition, the people were able to flood the frontier land with water from the river, so that in addition to the stakes the passage of both men and horses was made wellnigh impossible. The people of Kuch Behar in those days expanded and pulled downwards the lobes of their ears till they were about 8 inches long. Like the people of Cambay, described in a previous chapter, they had hospitals for sheep, goats, dogs, cats, birds, &c., in which these animals, when they were old, lame, or sick, could be kept in tranquillity until they died

<sup>1</sup> Kuch Behar is nowadays a small native state of about 1300 miles in area, but it was once much larger. Behar is a Hindu geographical name applied to a town, and formerly to a large district between the Ganges and the Himalayas. Kuch, or more correctly Koch, is the name of a widespread Mongolian tribe of Tibetan and Burmese affinities which still inhabits much of northern Bengal between Nipal and Assam. Like the Newar, or Nipalese, they were Hinduized some hundreds of years ago, and their native chiefs of Tibeto-Burmese race declared themselves to be of the warrior caste and therefore quite fit to mate with Brahmans, a theory which the Brahman missionaries in this and some other non-Aryanized districts of India found it convenient to accept. A little while before Fitch's visit Kuch Behar had risen to a position of some importance under the Maharaja Nar Narayan, whose rule extended to Assam and far down into Bengal. In the seventeenth century the powerful viceroys of the Mughals in Bengal reduced the area of the Kuch Behar state, which, owing to a disputed succession, came under British suzerainty in 1773. It is now one of the most progressive native states in the Indian Empire.



a natural death. They even gave meat to the ants, and fed other insects. The small cash of this country consisted of almonds, so that if you were hungry you could eat your money!

When in Kuch Behar, Fitch received and recorded the first information which is to be found in English or any other literature about the still mysterious country of Bhūtan. This land lay to the north of Kuch Behar, and was called "Botanter", with a chief city, Bottia (Bhutia). The people are described as being very tall and strong, and here there were merchants who came from China, Muscovy, and Tatar, visiting Bhutan to buy musk, agate stones, silk, pepper, and saffron like the saffron of Persia.<sup>1</sup> The country of Bhutan was large. A journey of three months would be required to cross it. The mountains he described as very lofty (as we know, they range between 23,000 and 25,000 feet). One of them was so steep that when a man was six days' journey off it he could see it perfectly, and the people upon these mountains were able to see ships sailing on the distant sea. (This, of course, was a wild exaggeration, unless it applied to the lake-like Brahmaputra River in the southern plains). The Bhutias cultivated the fashion of ears with lobes 8 inches long, calling people apes who possessed ears of the ordinary dimensions. He also heard of the yaks of Tibet, with their huge bushy tails, of which the hair was a yard in length, and which were so much sought after in China for decorating banners, and in Burma and Siam for adorning state elephants. From Kuch Behar Fitch descended southwards across the delta of the Ganges (through a wild, uninhabited country, in order to avoid the human robbers, who were

<sup>1</sup> Saffron is the orange dye, perfume, drug, and spice made from the base of the flower of the yellow crocus.

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more dangerous than the "very many tigers", the buffalo, wild swine, and deer, which they passed on their way) to Hugli, a station some 30 miles distance to the north of where Calcutta now stands, which had been founded by the Portuguese in 1537 as their headquarters in Bengal.

In the delta of the Ganges, on the verge of the Tipperah district, he found the people not as yet subdued by the Mughal emperors. The Mughal Empire was not extended up to the borders of Assam and Burma until the next century. From Serrepor, on the Meghna mouth of the Ganges, Fitch made a bold journey in a small ship belonging to a Portuguese named Alberto Caravinhos, across the Bay of Bengal down the coast of Arakan to Cape Negrais on the western limits of the Irawadi delta, or of the country which was then universally known as Bagu or Pegu. Fortunately, they were favoured with quiet weather, otherwise they must have thrown much of their cargo overboard to save themselves. The ship was so crowded with people and goods that there was very little room to lie down. Yet their passage must have been a swift one, for Fitch greatly underestimates the distance between the mouth of the Ganges and the mouths of the Irawadi, which he calculates at only 270 miles instead of more than 500.

From Cape Negrais, where he entered the Bassein River, he made his way in country boats across the Irawadi delta till he reached the Pegu River, and this he ascended to the town of that name, then the richest and most important place of resort in Further India.<sup>1</sup> As to the Burmese people he met with in the Irawadi delta (it must be remembered that they were of the Mon-Annam stock and quite different from the true Burmese),

<sup>1</sup> Its place has since been taken by Rangoon about 60 miles to the south-west.

he describes them as very tall and "well disposed", the women white-skinned, with round faces and little eyes. Their houses were lofty and built upon piles, partly on account of the marshy character of the ground, but mainly because the land swarmed with fierce tigers. The people ascended to their houses up long ladders. Their plantations were full of great fig trees, oranges, coconut palms, and other fruits. The last few miles of the journey to Pegu had to be performed in a sort of sedan chair, described by Fitch as a coach carried on men's shoulders.

Pegu he found to be a city great and strong, with walls of stone and deep ditches round it. The houses inside were mostly made of bamboo and thatched with grass. The warehouses for traders' goods, however, were constructed of brick, so as to be better preserved against fire, for this town of Pegu was ever and anon swept by conflagrations which destroyed in an hour four or five hundred houses of reeds and thatch. The town had twenty gates, each made of stone, with gilded wooden turrets on which sentinels were stationed. The streets of Pegu seemed very fair to Fitch, accustomed to the narrow lanes and alleys of English towns of that date. They were perfectly straight from one gate to another, and so broad that ten or twelve men might ride alongside. They were planted with avenues of palm trees, which gave a delightful shade over the side walks in the daytime. The better-class houses were made of wood and roofed with tiles. The king's palace was also of wood sumptuously gilded, and the pagoda or temple was covered with tiles of silver, and the walls were blazing with gold. Within the first courtyard of the king's palace was an immense stable for the elephants, amongst which there were four white ones.

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Whenever one of these white elephants was brought to the king as a present (probably from Siam) it was the custom of all the merchants in the city to be commanded to see it, and then each merchant had to give the king a present equal in value to about 4*s.* 2*d.* But, having given this present, the merchant might afterwards come and see the elephants whenever he pleased, even though they were within the king's courtyard. The King of Pegu at that day bore the proud title of "King of the White Elephants". If any other king possessed a white elephant, and would not sell it or give it, he made war upon him. The white elephants of Pegu had each one a house to himself, richly gilt and provided with vessels of silver and gold to feed out of. Every day the elephants, white or grey, were taken down to the waterside to wash; but the white elephants walked under canopies of cloth-of-gold or of silk, carried over them by a number of men, while they were preceded by musicians playing on drums, harps, and other instruments. When the white elephants reached the riverside they were attended by a gentleman of position, whose office it was to wash their feet in a silver basin.

The ordinary grey elephants were very abundant in the open country round about Pegu, and these were easily captured by the aid of trained female elephants, who lured the wild males into enclosures, where they were afterwards secured.

The King of Pegu kept very great state, and seems twice a day to have shown himself in his magnificence to the people, with his nobles sitting on each side a good distance off, and the whole court surrounded by a guard of armed men. If any man then required to speak to the king he had to kneel down at a great dis-

tance, raise his hands above his head, and touch the ground three times with his forehead, then advance a certain distance and go through the same ceremony, and finally repeat it a third time near to where the king was sitting. Then he sat down and talked to the king, and if the king liked him he invited him nearer, if not, he requested him to go farther away. When the king rode abroad it was with a great guard and many noblemen, and usually in a golden castle on the back of an elephant, or sometimes in an immense sedan chair, likewise gilt and adorned with many rubies and sapphires. This was carried upon sixteen to eighteen men's shoulders. The King of Pegu had treasure houses full of gold and silver, rubies, sapphires, spinels, and other precious stones. He had one wife and about three hundred ladies of the palace.

This monarch sat in judgment almost every day. The people who came before him did not speak, but tendered their supplications or defences written with an iron needle on the fronds of the Palmyra fan palm. The portions of the fronds thus used were about 2 feet long and 2 inches broad. Having tendered their petition, they would withdraw to a certain distance and remain there with a small present. If the king was disposed to do them justice he accepted the present. If he rejected their suit he would not take it, and the supplicant went away.

Fitch was much impressed with the orderly way in which trade was carried on, and the provisions in force for honesty and the payment of debts. The current money of Pegu was a kind of brass, apparently divided into pieces of fixed weight worth about half a crown each in English money. The exports of Pegu at that time consisted of gold and silver and precious stones (especially



c. 400

THE KING OF PEGU RECEIVES AN ENVOY (17th CENTURY)



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rubies and sapphires); tin, lead, and copper; musk, lac varnish, various perfumed woods and gums, "long" pepper; rice and the strong wine or spirit made of rice; and sugar. Ships came to this port direct from Arabia, bringing woollen goods, scarlet cloth, velvets; and opium from India.

Fitch noted in his journal the size and gorgeousness of the pagodas or temples, most of them gilded from the top to the bottom, within and without. The priests or tallipois went strangely appavelled in brown and yellow clothes, girt round the middle with a broad belt, bare-headed, with a piece of dressed leather hanging on a string about their necks, which it was their custom to take off and sit upon whenever they wished to rest. They were also barefooted, with bare right arms, but they carried a kind of sunshade in their hands to defend them against sun and rain.

The houses of these priests were small, erected upon six or eight posts, and reached by a ladder of twelve to fourteen steps. They were placed by the wayside, chiefly on the edge of the woods. The priests would go about carrying a great pot or a wooden vessel fastened to a broad girdle passed over one shoulder. In such they received their food—rice, fish, and herbs. They did not ask for these things from the people, but stood outside the door; and the inhabitants of the house against which they posted themselves would come out and give them what they could, some one thing and some another. When the tallipois entered the temples to preach, many people carried gifts to them and placed them in the pulpit. Their only service seems to have been preaching, especially "against all abuses".

From Pegu, Fitch made a remarkable journey of five



and twenty days north-east into the Siamese Shan States, noting the abundance of wild buffaloes and elephants.<sup>1</sup> In this region of the Siamese Shan States he saw that there was abundance of copper and benzoin (a sweet-smelling resin from the *Styrax*-tree). He also describes the ruby mines "six days' journey from Ava" in the Mogok district, where the people found rubies, sapphires, and spinels, though he did not go there himself. The Burmese he calls "Brama"; and he gives an accurate description of their manner of tattooing their legs and stomachs, more especially the thighs; and how they not only had very little beard naturally, but felt such a dislike to the growth of hair on their faces that the men went about with little pincers to pull out hairs as soon as they made their appearance; though in spite of this some, as a matter of fashion, would let sixteen to twenty hairs grow together in a patch, extracting all the remainder. They blacked their teeth (probably with betel nut), and thought it a very low and animal condition to show white teeth "like a dog".

From Pegu, Fitch sailed to Malacca, passing by the port of Martaban, the Island of Tavoy (from whence came, according to him, a great store of tin which served all India), and the Island of Tenasserim, &c. From this region—besides tin—there have been exported for a long time past the edible birds' nests of which the Chinese are so fond. These are made by a species of swift (*Collocalia fuciphaga*), which makes these nests out of its own thickened saliva. (There is some foundation of moss or

<sup>1</sup> It is probable that the biggest elephants of recent times have been developed in Asia, and not in Africa. The greatest development in size of the Asiatic elephant seems to occur in Siam. The tallest elephant seen by Captain Thomas Bowrey, a traveller of the middle seventeenth century, was 14 feet high, and was apparently obtained from Jankseylan on the Siamese coast of the Malay Peninsula.

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fibre, but the cuplike nest is nearly all composed of the saliva secreted by the birds, which rapidly hardens into a white glue.)

Malacca, at the time of Fitch's arrival, was still strongly held by the Portuguese, but it had just been snatched by Portuguese bravery from very serious danger. A combination had been made against it between the King of Achin at the north end of Sumatra and of Johor at the southern extremity of the Malay Peninsula, both of them Muhammadan princes and more or less of Malay race. Between them they had blocked the Straits of Malacca and Singapore, and thus had cut off the already valuable trade between Malacca, China, and Japan, intending in this way to starve out the Portuguese settlement at Malacca: for the hinterland of Malacca in those days was wild forest and produced very little in the way of provisions. But the Portuguese, by the most daring bravery and with the aid of their superior artillery, smashed the combination and completely crushed the power of Johor. [It is curious under these circumstances that they did not seize and hold Singapore, just as an historian can never understand why they neglected to occupy and hold the Cape of Good Hope, when for a hundred and fifty years it lay at their disposal.]

Why Fitch did not attempt to continue his journey to China and present Queen Elizabeth's letter is not clear. Apparently the whole business had been forgotten by himself and Newbery; for the latter had only advised him to travel as far as Pegu and then to return to Bengal. After a short stay of two months at Malacca, and another visit to Pegu in the spring of 1588, he arrived at Bengal in November of that year. In February, 1589, he took ship from one of the mouths of the Ganges to Cochin,

calling at Ceylon on the way. He seems to have seen the King or Emperor of Kotta outside the Portuguese fort at Colombo, or at any rate received and recorded a vivid description of him—how he would arrive outside Colombo with a hundred thousand men and many elephants, but with his nearly naked soldiers miserably armed, though they made from time to time good shooting with their muskets. It was the custom for this King or Emperor of Kotta to stand when he gave audiences to anyone, and not to sit; and his attitude was a peculiar one, resembling, curiously enough, that adopted by negroes in East Central Africa. He would stand upon one leg, resting the other foot against the inside of the knee of the standing leg, and sometimes supporting himself with his sword in one hand. His dress was a fine painted cotton cloth wound round his middle. His hair was long and twisted up with a little fine cloth on the top of his head. Fitch again notices the largeness of the ears amongst this people (the Sinhalese), declaring that some of them were a span—8 inches—long. The elephants of Ceylon Fitch found to be smaller than those of Burma, but declared that they were much dreaded by the natives of India and Burma, because although smaller they were very pugnacious.

At Cochin, Fitch had to remain for eight months, and then he obtained a passage to Goa, and after that without difficulty to Chaul and Hormuz, whence he reached Basrah in the delta of the Euphrates. From Basrah he journeyed by boats upstream to Mosul, and then travelled overland through Southern Armenia to Aleppo and Tripolis, from which Syrian port he was conveyed in an English ship to London, arriving there in April, 1591, after eight years' absence.

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Fitch apparently lived for some years after his return to England. The last record of his existence is dated at the close of 1606. He does not seem to have belonged to the newly founded East India Company, but to have been their adviser in various matters. Apparently several of his descendants, either direct or collateral, distinguished themselves in India and Burma down to the latter part of the nineteenth century.

## CHAPTER VIII

### The Dutch and English dispossess the Portuguese

The Dutch became interested in the trade of India through their association with the crown of Spain, which had united to itself the crown of Portugal in 1580. The great towns and seaports of the Netherlands became the centres from which the pepper, spice, precious stones, and other products of India were distributed over Germany and Northern Europe. In those days "Dutch"<sup>1</sup> and "Fleming" were practically the same, and the Netherlands extended from Friesland in the north to Picardy in the south, and included not only Amsterdam and Rotterdam, but Bruges and Antwerp. The Dutch were adventurous seamen before the English, and when they were under the rule of the Dukes of Burgundy. Under the reign of the Emperor of Germany and King of Spain, Charles V, they participated in the Spanish development of America, in the carrying on of the African slave trade, and attempted also to find a way to India and the Far East by sailing past the Arctic coasts of Norway and Russia. Not a few enterprising young Dutchmen or

<sup>1</sup> The word "Dutch" is an English rendering of the "Deutsch" or "Duitsch" of Germany and Holland, and was originally employed to indicate Germany and the Germans (High Dutch and Low Dutch). From the thirteenth to the sixteenth century English writers generally indicated the Dutch of Flanders and Holland as "Flemings". It was only in the seventeenth century, after the Northern Flemings had acquired their independence of Spain, and had joined with the Western Frisians to form the "United Provinces", of which Holland was the principal part, that the English took to calling them "Dutch" and the lands of the Holy Roman Empire "Germany".

Flemings accompanied Portuguese prelates, viceroys, or governors as secretaries, clerks, accountants, and so forth. A noteworthy example is the celebrated JAN HUYGHEN VAN LINSCHOTEN, who has left us a wonderful description of Goa in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. He also wrote the most remarkable geographical work of that period or for a long time afterwards, an Itinerary which placed before the world all the information which could be collected at the close of the sixteenth century in Spain and Portugal, in India and Africa, regarding the newly discovered countries.

The people of the Netherlands became divided into Hollanders and Flemings chiefly by their religious differences; the Flemings being the Dutch-speaking people of the southern half of the Netherlands, who remained attached to the Roman Catholic religion and the Spanish-Habsburg dynasty; and the Hollanders and Frisians those who had adopted Protestant forms of Christianity and had successfully revolted against Spain. The Hollanders were the bolder seamen, and as soon as the Portuguese crown was worn by the King of Spain they set themselves to attack the Portuguese possessions all over the world, as well as the Spanish, not only to punish thereby the Spanish monarchy for its cruel treatment of them; but once more to stock their marketplaces with the products of the East, which they had begun, as from a northern Venice, to furnish to France, England, Scotland, Denmark, and Germany.

In 1594 a Company of Foreign Merchants was founded in Holland, which was the pioneer of the Dutch East India Company, and this company sent out Cornelius Houtman with a fleet of four ships to find his way to India round the Cape of Good Hope. This little fleet apparently

steered direct from the Cape of Good Hope to the Malay Archipelago, reaching Bantam, in the Island of Java, at the close of 1595, returning to Holland two years afterwards. Immediately afterwards, in 1598, Houtman set forth again, taking with him as a pilot the celebrated English discoverer, JOHN DAVIS.<sup>1</sup> In the same year another fleet of ships, of between 75 and 250 tons burthen, left Rotterdam with William Adams as the principal pilot. [This fleet was driven by winds from the South-west African coast to the Straits of Magellan. Afterwards the ships crossed the Pacific Ocean, and arrived full of dying men and almost without supplies at the coast of Japan.] Adams, whose life and adventures were a remarkable romance, was the first Englishman to visit Japan, where he married a Japanese, and where, with the exception of voyages to Siam, he ~~lived~~ lived all the rest of his life, dying in 1620.

In 1603 the Dutch besieged Goa, and though they failed to take it they gradually swept the Portuguese and Spanish ships from the eastern seas. By 1613 they had founded trading stations and forts at several points on the coasts of Java, the Malay Peninsula, Siam, Sumatra, Celebes, and Amboyna, and most of the Spice Islands lying between Java and New Guinea. Between 1638 and 1658 they had completely ousted the Portuguese from any point on the coast of Ceylon, and took their place as the virtual rulers of that island. To this day the strait between Ceylon and India is known by the name of a Dutch governor, PALK. They captured Malacca from the Portuguese in 1640, and established themselves in place of the

<sup>1</sup> Famous already for his discoveries in Arctic North America, Davis subsequently entered the service of the English East India Company, but was killed by pirates off the island of Bintang, nearly opposite Singapore.

Portuguese in Bengal, on the Koromandel and Malabar coasts, only leaving to the Portuguese Goa, Damão, and Diu, besides the overlooked Portuguese settlements and trading stations on the Islands of Timor and Flores in the southern part of the Malay Archipelago.

But the English were soon to appear in the Far East as formidable rivals to the Dutch. As early as 1589, before the return of Ralph Fitch, English merchants had petitioned Queen Elizabeth for a charter to enable them to send ships round the Cape of Good Hope to trade with India. This was after the defeat of the Spanish Armada had made it possible for Elizabeth to put herself in frank opposition to any Spanish or Portuguese monopoly of trade. Apparently the permission was granted; for in 1591 three ships left Plymouth for the East Indies. Of these only one—the *Edward Bonaventure*, commanded by Captain (Sir) JAMES LANCASTER—reached India. For some months he made a series of piratical attacks on Portuguese shipping in the Bay of Bengal and off Sumatra. He set sail for England from Ceylon in December, 1592, called at St. Helena on his way back, and then was driven across the Atlantic by contrary winds till he reached the West Indies. Off the Island of Mona, between Porto Rico and Santo Domingo, the *Edward Bonaventure*, whilst her captain and the greater part of her crew were on shore, slipped her anchor and disappeared, being never more heard of. Lancaster and his lieutenant and twelve of the crew—all that was left of ninety-seven who had started from Plymouth in 1591—were finally conveyed from Santo Domingo to Dieppe by kindly French ships. From Dieppe they crossed over to Rye. Lancaster, so far from being sickened of Eastern adventure by these risks, anxieties, and sufferings, soon



afterwards embarked on a privateering attack against the Portuguese in Brazil, which proved very successful; and finally commanded the first fleet dispatched by the East India Company of England to India in 1601, being knighted by King James after his return in 1603, and living as a prosperous director of the East India Company till 1618. During his last voyage he had established the English as traders in two parts of the Island of Sumatra, in the Molucca Islands, and in Java.

The English East India Company had been established by a charter from Queen Elizabeth on 31st September, 1600, with a capital of £70,000. It had sprung into existence somewhat rapidly, because in 1599 the Dutch, conceiving that through their superiority at sea over the Portuguese they might aspire to a commercial monopoly of the products of India, had raised the price of pepper in their home markets from three shillings a pound to six shillings, and even eight shillings. It is amazing to reflect on the changes in the world's history which have been brought about by this spice! The merchants of London—quite in nineteenth or twentieth century style—because of this advance in the price of pepper, held a meeting on the 22nd September, 1599, with the Lord Mayor in the chair, and agreed to form an association for the purpose of trading directly with India; separately, no doubt, from the Levant Company established on the coast of Syria, which could only carry on a trade in Indian products by the favour of the Turks, the Venetians, and the Portuguese. Queen Elizabeth, who from her very advent to the English throne seems to have favoured Oriental commerce, and had sent an envoy to Persia as early as 1662, now dispatched, in 1600, by way of Constantinople and the Levant, another envoy (Mildenhall)

to the Great Mughal Emperor to apply for privileges for an English company. But apparently he did not reach his destination.

Nearly every year that followed Lancaster's return in 1603 saw ships starting on the voyage round the Cape of Good Hope from India to Malaysia, to China and Japan, either on behalf of the Chartered Company, or of other companies, or of private adventurers (all these enterprises becoming fused by 1709 into the "United Company of Merchants Trading to the East Indies", or, as it came to be known later, "The Honourable East India Company"). These enterprises naturally provoked the furious opposition of the Portuguese and bitter hostility from the Dutch. The Portuguese fought out the question with Sir HENRY MIDDLETON at Cambay in 1611, and with Captain Best at Swalli, the port of Surat, in 1615, and Captain Shilling off the Coast of Malabar in 1620.

For some years the hostility of the Portuguese and their intrigues with native princes prevented any definite establishment of English trading factories on the coasts of Southern India. To revenge themselves for this action on the part of the Portuguese, the English sided with the Persians in 1622 and used their artillery and ships to assist the Persian forces of Shah Abbas to attack the Portuguese forts and forces on the Islands of Kishin and Hormuz. The victory that was thus gained (partly through the valour of WILLIAM BAFFIN, the great Arctic navigator, who was killed in the fight at Kishin) drove the Portuguese out of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf, and was a great blow to their power in the Indian Ocean. In return the English received a grant in perpetuity of the customs of the port of Gombrün (Bandar-Abbasi), and although

this grant seems to have lapsed after a time, from this period—1622—began and continued almost without interruption to the present day the growth of British influence and interests in Southern Persia and the Persian Gulf.

On the other hand, the Dutch, by fair means and foul,<sup>1</sup> drove the English out of the Malay Archipelago and Peninsular by 1625, and the latter only retained a foothold in that region at Bantam in Java.

The growth of British trading interests in India, and the success of the English in warding off the attacks of the Portuguese, made it necessary for the King of Great Britain to be represented by a qualified ambassador<sup>2</sup> at the Court

<sup>1</sup> Even making all allowance for the harsh manners of the period and the lack of any Christianity in dealings between Christian nations, one cannot but notice the cold-blooded ferocity of the Dutch in their attacks on the Portuguese and English who got in their way in Southern Asia. Among several similar incidents there stand out particularly prominent in our national remembrance during the middle and end of the seventeenth century the *massacre of Amboyna in 1623*, and that of *Fort Zelandia* (as it was called by the Dutch) about the same date. The English under a Captain Towerson had settled in the Spice Island of Amboyna about 1619. Four years afterwards, on the plea that they were intriguing with the natives, the Dutch seized thirteen Englishmen and their Javanese—or Japanese—servants. They tortured their prisoners cruelly to make them confess, and then put them to death. Three Englishmen only were respited out of the thirteen. Shortly afterwards the Dutch, finding the English had built a fort on the south-west coast of the island of Formosa to afford a shelter to English shipping trading to Japan, Korea, China, &c. (on the site of the present Taiwan), visited the place in friendly guise with ships and soldiers, and made as though they were sufferers from a tempest and obliged to seek shelter. The English received them most hospitably in the little fort, the Dutchmen bringing with them presents of wine. Unfortunately the English garrison drank too freely, whereupon the Dutch attacked them suddenly and slaughtered every man. In a similar way, by treachery and ruthless murder, the Dutch got rid of the seventeenth-century English trading posts in Siam. They expelled the English from Java (Bantam) in 1682.

<sup>2</sup> CAPTAIN HAWKINS was one of the merchant envoys who went (in 1608) to negotiate with the Great Mogul before the arrival of a proper ambassador like Sir Thomas Roe. He obtained a firman from the Emperor Jahangir for the establishment of the English company at Surat; but was, unfortunately, a great drunkard. The custom of hard drinking—distilled spirits as well as Portuguese and Spanish wines—had become very prevalent in England from the very beginning of the seventeenth century. Although the drinking of wine was a family failing amongst all the Moghals, they were nevertheless very particular that no one should approach their presence who was at all addicted to this vice. The Emperor, therefore, commanded, on pain of his displeasure, that none of his nobles, courtiers, officials, and equally no foreigner, should come into his presence soon after having drunk wine or spirits. He

of the Great Mughal, SIR THOMAS ROE or Rowe, born near Wanstead, on the Essex side of London, the grandson of a Lord Mayo. of London, and at twelve years old a student of Magdalen College, Oxford, was selected to be a Resident of the Chartered Company at the Court of the Great Mughal; and at the same time to be the holder of a diplomatic appointment under King James, which would enable him to present to the Emperor of India petitions for the granting of commercial privileges to the British. Sir Thomas Roe arrived at the port of Swalli near Surat in the autumn of 1615, at a time when the fortunes of the English in Western India were very low. The immense prestige and influence still possessed by the Portuguese, through their association with the Spanish monarchy, had so far prevailed on the Emperor Jahangir (the son of Akbar) that he was on the point of signing a treaty with them, by which the British would have been excluded from trade with all parts of India under Mughal control. After two years of the most anxious negotiations, sometimes flouted, sometimes restored to high honour, obliged to bribe favourites and queens, Roe succeeded in obtaining a firman or signed grant of certain privileges for the English in Western India on the part of the Great Mughal. These privileges were chiefly connected with their right to trade at Surat. They were thus enabled to keep at bay both the Portuguese and the Dutch.

employed one or more doorkeepers, who ushered the visitors through the courts of the palace, to smell the breath of each person about to be admitted to the imperial presence. In order that his sense of smell might be more acute, the door porter was to enter on his duties fasting. Captain Hawkins had to pass through this ordeal, and was soon detected as a winebibber; and for some reason, no doubt a spiteful one, was hauled up before the emperor and was charged with having "drunk strong drink". "Whereat the Great Mughal paused a little space, and, considering that he was a stranger, bade him go to his house, and admonished him that he should not again come to Court when he was in liquor" (From *The Travels of John Jourdain*, 1608-17).

But the attempts of Roe to negotiate with the Great Mughal led him on a series of remarkably interesting journeys through Western India, which have left us interesting pictures of that region and of the life of the early Mughal emperors, worth recording in some detail.

This was the manner of Roe's reception by the second son of Jahangir, the Prince Parwiz. With the prince was associated the Khan-khanan or commander-in-chief of the Mughal's armies, who at that time supported the cause of this effeminate Prince Parwiz against that of the elder son, Prince Khurram.

In the outer court of the prince's residence were about a hundred cavalry soldiers under arms, ranged on either side of a lane up which those persons seeking the presence of the prince had to pass. Parwiz himself sat in the gallery of an inner court, with a canopy over his head and a great carpet before him.

Sir Thomas Roe and all succeeding English ambassadors or envoys to the Great Mughal always donned the English dress of their time. Roe's servants wore red taffeta cloaks trimmed with green taffeta. Roe's chaplain, the Rev. Edward Terry, describes himself as wearing a long black cassock.

The English ambassador was asked on his way up through the lines of cavalry to prostrate himself bare-headed and touch the ground with his forehead, but he refused, and passed on erect, until he came to a railed-in daïs immediately below the prince's gallery. Here he stopped and bowed, and the prince bowed in return. Then he ascended to the stage or gallery on which the prince sat. After greetings on either side, which were conducted with a certain awkwardness, Roe asked permission to ascend to the highest daïs in this series of



SIR THOMAS ROE



stages on which the prince himself was sitting; but he was told this was impossible, even to the Shah of Persia or the Sultan of Turkey. Roe then asked for a chair on which he could sit down, but was told no man ever sat in the prince's presence. The utmost concession accorded to him was that he might lean against one of the silvered columns which upheld the canopy.

One of Roe's presents to this prince was a case of wine or ardent spirits, and the private interview which was to succeed this public reception was rendered impossible by the prince getting drunk!

At Ajmere, in Rajputana, Sir Thomas Roe came up with the Mughal Emperor, Jahangir. Here, or wherever else he resided in a city, it was the custom of the Great Mughal to hold a *darbar* or court at four in the afternoon, at which he received ambassadors and distinguished strangers, and also petitions and presents from his subjects.

When he received Roe at his *darbar*, the latter was led up to the opening in a rail or barrier which surrounded the royal presence. Here he was met by two Court officials. On passing through the first barrier he made a reverence, another bow as he passed through the second, and finally, when he came immediately under the emperor's gallery or raised platform, a third. He there found himself amongst the other ambassadors, the great officers and nobles of the state, who sat immediately below the emperor's gallery within the innermost barrier on a *daïs* raised from the ground and covered with beautiful carpets. Outside the first of the barriers was the crowd of common people, admitted so that all might see the emperor. Roe compares the scene of the Court to the English stage: the sovereign in a box or gallery, the great personages on the



raised stage itself, and the vulgar below in the pit and beyond (or stalls and pit as we should say).

The Great Mughal seems to have greeted Roe with much courtesy, bidding him welcome as the envoy of a famous king. Roe delivered to him a Persian translation of King James's letter and also his commission, which the great Mughal looked at curiously and kept for further examination. Also, some of Roe's presents were laid before him. The Emperor Jahangir then plied him with questions as to his health. This was indifferent; so the emperor advised him to keep at home until he had recovered strength, and afterwards sent his own physicians to cure him.

Jahangir makes but little reference to Roe's coming, and none to King James's letter, in the journal which he kept as a chronicle of state affairs, attaching far more importance, for example, to the arrival of an ambassador from Persia. His presents to Roe do not seem to have been particularly magnificent, though Roe tries to make the best of them. For instance, whenever the monarch went hunting and killed a wild boar, which, of course, was a foul, uneatable creature in the eyes of the Muhammadans and of all the superior castes of Hindus, he would send the carcass to Roe, who so often received these "wild hogs" as presents that he must have got thoroughly tired of the flavour of such pork. The emperor, however, was sufficiently canny or mean to ask Roe to send back the tusks of the wild boars, as they might come in useful. Sometimes the emperor sent him "a mighty elk" (possibly a Sambur deer or Nilghai antelope) which Roe describes as "reasonable rank meat". Nevertheless, the ambassador fared very well on this journey to Ajmere and back as regards food. He had an English as well as an Indian

cook to dress his diet, and he insisted on having his meals (except when eating with Easterns) served in an English fashion with tables and chairs.

Amongst the presents brought out by Roe from England to present to the Great Mughal was an English coach, with harness and four horses, together with an English coachman named William Hemsell, who had formerly driven two English bishops. The coach was lined with crimson China velvet, and when the emperor noted this he remarked that he wondered how the King of England could trouble himself to send all the way to China for velvet when he had much better velvet nearer home (Italian). Immediately after it was presented to him the Mughal caused the coach to be taken to pieces, so that his workmen might exactly imitate these pieces and so put together several other coaches exactly similar. This they did, and then the English pattern was once more put together again, only instead of the China velvet they used as linings very rich stuffs with a ground of silver embroidered all over with varieties of silken flowers. Instead of the brass nails that were in the coach when sent out from England, silver nails were used or even gilt. The coachman was taken into the emperor's service at a salary of about four shillings a day, but every time the emperor went for a ride he gave the coachman a present of about £10, besides a gorgeous uniform. This coachman might have risen to a high position in the state, as he seems to have taken the emperor's fancy greatly; but he was soon carried off by some malady, no doubt a fever.

It was the custom of the Mughal emperor—we learn from the writings of Roe and his chaplain Terry—to rise from his slumbers at dawn, and, after a hasty toilette, to

show himself just after sunrise to the people in a balcony directly facing the east, about 7 or 8 feet above the ground. At this time a great concourse of persons would assemble, but chiefly nobles and courtiers anxious to show themselves to the monarch; and when he appeared they would cry out with a loud voice: *Padishā salamat*, which signified: "Long life and health to the Padishā (emperor)." Every Tuesday in the week the emperor would sit in this same balcony to render justice. He would never refuse to hear the poorest man's complaints, listening with patience to both sides; but he would also try criminal cases and sentence to death, and then, "with too much delight in blood", would witness the execution being carried out by his trained elephants.

After this sitting in the balcony was over, the emperor would for a while retire from sight into his palace, and then perhaps proceed in state to one of the great courts on the ground floor. "He would descend the stairs with such an acclamation of 'health' as would outcry cannons," writes Sir Thomas Roe. "At the stairs' foot, where I met him and shuffled to be next, one brought a mighty carp, another a dish of white stuff like starch, into which the emperor put his finger, then touched the fish, and so rubbed it on his forehead, a ceremony which presages good fortune. Then came another official and buckled on his sword and shield, this being set all over with great diamonds and rubies and fastened with belts of gold. Another hung about him his quiver with thirty arrows, and his bow in a case . . . On his head he wore a rich turban with a plume of heron feathers, not many, but long. On one side of the turban hung a ruby, unset, as big as a walnut; on the other side a diamond as large; in the middle a heart-shaped emerald. The turban was

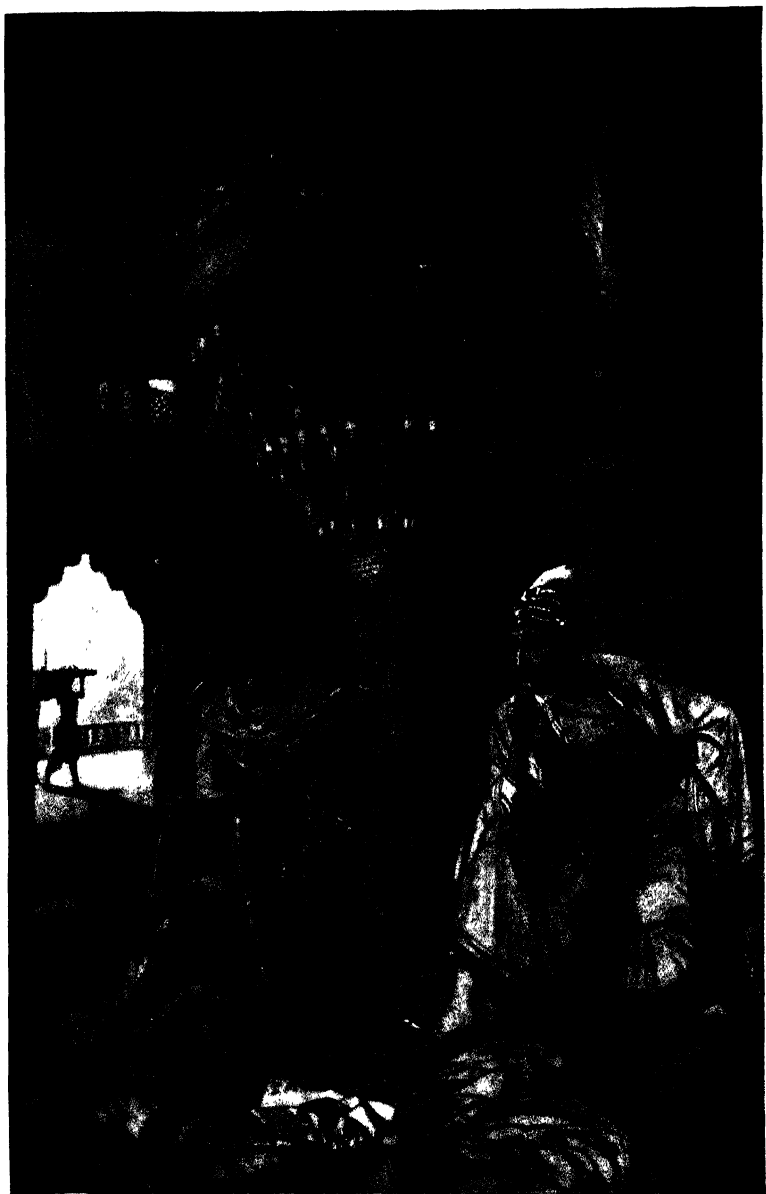
wreathed about with a chain of great pearls, rubies, and diamonds. The emperor wore a necklace or chain of three rows of pearls, greater I never saw. At his elbows there were armlets set with diamonds, and on his wrists three rows of several kinds of precious stones. His hands were bare, but almost on every finger a ring. His gloves, which were of English make, were stuck under his girdle. His sleeveless coat of cloth of gold was worn over his shirt of thin lawn. On his feet was a pair of buskins embroidered with pearls, with pointed, turned-up toes."

Yet, incongruously enough, the emperor would descend from his magnificence to consort with Muhammadan fakirs and jogis or Hindu saints. These he held in great reverence, because of the sufferings they inflicted on their bodies and the ascetic life they led. With a miserable wretch clothed in rags, crowned with feathers and covered with ashes, his majesty—wrote Sir Thomas Roe—would talk for about an hour with such familiarity and show of kindness as argued an humility not found easily amongst kings. All this time the beggar remained seated, which the emperor's own son would not dare to do, or he would solemnly present the emperor as a present with a cake of coarse flour baked by himself in the ashes. This the sovereign would accept most willingly and endeavour to eat, "though a dainty mouth would scarcely have done so". The remainder of the cake he would wrap up and put back into the poor man's bosom, at the same time pouring a hundred rupees into his lap and picking up anything which might fall on either side of the seated beggar. When his own meal was brought to him he would share it with the beggar, and when he wished to take his leave, the latter being too stiff in his joints to rise, the emperor would take him up in his arms, filthy

as he was, and embrace him three times, calling him father.

After supper at eight o'clock<sup>1</sup> the Mughal would descend to the Ghuzl-khana or 'bathroom, a "fair court" (according to Roe) in the midst of which stood a masonry throne. On this the emperor sometimes sat, but more often in a chair or on a couch below. Here he would discuss quite frankly questions of peace and war, of international government, and of projected laws. It was not difficult to get access to the monarch at this time, between seven and nine (the court being splendidly lit with torches and wax tapers), but everyone before admittance had to be inspected by the guard, who smelt each person's breath to be quite sure they had not drunk wine. Nevertheless, the emperor had wine placed by him, and would sometimes drink till he was drunk, or until he fell asleep, upon which all assembled immediately quitted the place, except those who were his personal servants. In consequence of the freedom of discussion the news of all that was in the emperor's mind soon reached the outer public in the streets, and the next day the king's new resolutions might be "discussed and censured by every rascal", writes Roe; yet this audience between seven and nine was a good time for ambassadors to propound matters to the emperor, as he was "for the most part very pleasant and full of talk".

<sup>1</sup> The way in which the Muhammadans in India reckoned the flight of time as late as the seventeenth century was not by clocks, or watches, or sundials, but by clepsydra or water clocks. The time was reckoned as sixty hours of twenty-four minutes each in the full day, instead of twenty-four hours of sixty minutes. A great bowl or basin was filled with very clear water, and a small, thin, copper dish holding a little more than half a pint, with a small, round hole drilled through the bottom, was placed on the surface of the water in the great bowl. Gradually it filled and sank, and the time that it took to do this was computed to be one of these hours of twenty-four minutes. The bowl was watched by a man who, as the copper dish sank to the bottom, replaced it and at the same time struck a gong. The sixty hours were divided into watches of eight hours each.



THE GREAT MOGUL DISCOURING WITH A HUMBLE FAKIR (17th CENTURY)



A little later Roe writes in his journal: "This day was the birthday of the king (Emperor Jehangir) and solemnized as a great feast, the king being weighed against a mass of jewels, gold and silver cloth, silk, butter, rice, fruit, and many other things" (really a collection of samples).<sup>1</sup> These were usually given away afterwards to Brahmans and Mullahs or Muhammadan priests. When Roe saw him on such an occasion he was so covered with jewels that he presented the aspect of dazzling wealth. On this his birthday the royal elephants were sent for to pay him homage. It had already been recorded by a remarkable English traveller of this period (JOHN JOURDAIN,<sup>2</sup> who was at Agra in 1611) that the Great Mughal had a guard or regiment of elephants which kept watch over him and came daily to the king to perform this duty, and had been trained when beholding the monarch at once to raise their trunks over their heads and salute him. These elephants would refuse to go back to their stables until the king had answered their salutes or dismissed them. They were accompanied by three or four young elephants as pages, and each royal elephant had two female elephants to represent their wives. Their chains, bells, trappings, and furniture were of gold and silver, of gorgeous coloured velvet and damask silk. They were decorated with flags and banners and with headplates and

<sup>1</sup> According to Terry, the chaplain, the ceremony of weighing the Mughal emperor on his birthday was performed "in a fair spacious room" wherein none were admitted but by special leave. The scales in which he was weighed were plated with gold, and also the beam on which they hung by great chains was made likewise of that precious metal. The king, sitting in one of these scales, was weighed first against silver coin, which immediately afterwards was distributed amongst the poor. Then he was weighed against three several things laid in silk bags on the opposite scale. Whilst the Mughal was being thus weighed he cast about amongst the standers-by thin pieces of gold and silver made like flowers, or cloves and nutmegs, but very thin and hollow. Then he drank to his nobles in his royal wine, and they in turn pledged his health.

<sup>2</sup> Jourdain was a native of Lyme Regis, in Dorset, who as a servant of the East India Company explored Arabia, India, and Malaysia between 1609 and 1617.



breastplates of gold set with rubies and emeralds. On this occasion of the emperor's birthday, as witnessed by Roe, each of the royal elephants bowed down before the king, making a solemn reverence. To the keeper of each royal elephant the emperor gave a present, "and so" (says Roe) "with gracious compliments to me he rose and went in".

[The remarkable training of the elephant by the natives of India had been remarked elsewhere than in the Mughal dominions in the latter part of the sixteenth century. Linschoten describes how at Goa, on New Year's Day, the Government elephants, in solemn procession (their bodies painted with the arms and crosses of Portugal, and each elephant carrying on his back six trumpeters or players on harps), would come to salute the viceroy, the archbishop, and the other great officials of Goa. Arrived at the place where these were assembled, they would kneel down "with great lowliness and thankfulness" for the good deeds done to the keepers—"which they think to be done unto themselves". When they passed by, the houses of the great personages they were taught to bow their heads, as likewise when they passed the doors of churches. It was customary, when elephants passed through the markets, for the sellers of vegetables to throw them some green stuff or fruit to eat. Amongst such was a woman who always made a point of giving presents of fruit and vegetables to a certain elephant. When in the height of summer (rainy season) this elephant went must, or mad (a condition which occurs to male elephants every year at this season), and got loose from his keepers, dashing about the marketplace trumpeting, smashing the stalls, and ready to kill anyone he might reach, he—the elephant—espied lying on the ground the child of the

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woman who had given him such frequent presents, but who, in the panic, had been separated from her child and had taken refuge in a house. The great beast stopped, picked up the child tenderly with his trunk, and set it upon the counter of a shop. This done, he went again on his course "stamping, crying, and swinging about". But the child was safely restored to its mother.]

On the night of this birthday festival, at ten o'clock, the Emperor sent impetuously for Roe, who had already gone to bed. Jahangir had heard that Roe carried about with him one or two miniatures, portraits of people. He desired to see them so that native artists might make copies of them for his wives. Roe dressed hastily, and took two of these miniatures with him, finding the emperor seated cross-legged on a little throne, still covered with diamonds, pearls, and rubies, and before him a low table of gold, on which was set out about fifty pieces of gold plate studded, almost covered, with precious stones. A number of his Court were about him in their best dresses, being urged to drink frequently from the great flagons of wine that were set round. Roe showed his two miniatures, one of which was evidently the portrait of a very beautiful young woman. The emperor fell in love with this, and asked whose portrait it was.

It was probably that of Roe's own wife, to whom he had been secretly married just before leaving for India, but to whom he was publicly united after his return from his embassy, and with whom he lived long and happily.

Roe said that it was a friend of his who was dead, but he esteemed it more than anything he possessed, as he could never get another similar picture if he were to part with this one. He offered the other miniature, a French one, to the emperor, who, however, persisted in asking

for that of the beautiful young woman, saying he had never seen so much beauty, and imploring Roe to tell him whether such a lovely woman had ever really lived. "I assured him that one had lived who resembled this picture in all things except that she was better-looking, but that she was now dead." After a great deal of bandying of compliments on either side, it was arranged that the emperor should have five copies made of this miniature and return Roe the original.

When the matter of the picture was settled, the emperor pressed Roe to drink, saying it was his birthday, and that all men should make merry: which wine would he take, a natural wine of the grape, or made wine?<sup>1</sup> Roe left it to the emperor, who decided to give him the made wine, which was served to him in a cup of gold. This Roe was asked to fill and drink five times for the emperor's sake, and then to accept of the cup as a present. However, the ambassador was only able to drink a little of the made wine, as it was so strong that it made him sneeze, whereupon the emperor called for raisins, almonds, and lemons, which were served on a plate of gold, and the ambassador was told that he might eat and drink what he would and no more. He then made reverence for his present, which was not without magnificence. The cup, cover, and dish on which the cup stood were of pure gold, and weighed about 20 ounces, and were set with about two thousand turquoises, rubies, and emeralds.

<sup>1</sup> Artificial or "Royal" wine was made by putting a certain quantity of arrack or rice spirit into an empty barrel that had contained wine from Europe. The dregs of other wine barrels were added, together with water and burnt sugar. After about eight months this had become a clear white liquid tasting something like white wine. There was also wine made of raisins, which were steeped in rice spirit for three or four days. The infusion was then strained and poured into an empty barrel, where it was kept for six or eight months, sometimes being sweetened with an infusion of dates.

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After this the emperor became quite frolicsome, and told Roe that he esteemed him more than any Frank he had ever seen; asked him if he liked eating the wild boars that he had sent to him, how he had the food dressed, what he drank with it, and so forth. Then, becoming lavishly generous with the wine, he sent for two great trays of newly coined silver rupis, and threw them amongst the personages of lesser importance below his Court; and amongst the noblemen and ambassadors he cast two platefuls of hollow almonds of gold and silver mingled. Roe, however, thought it unsuited to his dignity to scramble for these as did the others. After this the emperor distributed long strips of gold cloth for the making of turbans and golden girdles to all the musicians and waiters. At last the emperor, who could not hold up his head with the wine, lay down to sleep, and all departed.

The Great Mughal at that time was extremely desirous of obtaining English mastiffs and English or Dutch cart horses, because of the relatively large size of both as compared to Indian dogs or horses. One mastiff which had reached him from England fought with and killed first a leopard and then a wild boar.

There was a Jesuit missionary at the Court of Jahangir, CORSI, the Florentine, a man of admittedly high character with a talent for mission work, who afterwards died (1635) and was buried at Agra. This man met Roe with friendliness, reminding him that they were both by profession Christians, and that although there was a great difference in the form of their religion, what they should remember was rather the points on which they agreed, and not in the presence of these Muhammadans and Hindus make any display of their differences. In some respects he

represented the Portuguese as an agent at the Court of the Great Mughal; but he seems to have treated the English with fairness and kindness at the same time. Many arguments as to the superiority of one religion to the other took place at the Court of Jahangir, who, although not such a great and liberal-minded man as his father, Akbar, was nevertheless free from bigotry and disinclined to persecute any form of genuine religion. One day the house and the church of this Jesuit missionary had been burnt to the ground, only the crucifix remaining undestroyed. The Muhammadans were ready to exclaim that this was a miracle; but the Jesuit, fearing the ridicule of the Protestant chaplain (Terry), who had accompanied Roe, was more willing to ascribe it to chance. Nevertheless, the emperor sent for Father Corsi to be bantered by his creatures, and above all his rather fanatical Muhammadan sons. Teased by them, Corsi offered, if they demanded it, to enter a fire as proof of his faith in Christianity. But the emperor brought back the conversation to more peaceful and kindly channels.

About this time, however, a native juggler from Bengal exhibited a great ape—probably an orang-utan from Malaysia, no doubt very cleverly trained. This ape was introduced into the emperor's presence, and His Majesty was told that it could practise some form of thought-reading and find things that were carefully hidden. Jahangir took from his finger a ring and caused it to be hidden under the girdle of one amongst twelve pages. The ape was then called into his presence and ordered to find the ring. He at once went to the right boy and took it out of his girdle. Then the emperor caused twelve pieces of paper to be written in Persian letters with the names of twelve great lawgivers, no doubt amongst them some

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that were revered by the Hindus, while on others were inscribed the names of Moses, Jesus Christ (Isz., in Persian), Muhammad, and Ali. These were then shuffled in a bag, and the ape was ordered to take out the name of the one lawgiver that was really divine. The ape put in his "foot", and the paper which he took out was inscribed with the name of the Christ (Isa). This so amazed the emperor (who imagined that the ape's master could read Persian and could in some way assist him to pick out the right paper) that he wrote out twelve new ones himself, with the names in an official cypher. Again these papers were presented to the ape, and once more he selected the one that bore the name of Isa. At this, one of the principal officers of state grew so angry—telling the sovereign it was some clever imposture—that he desired to be allowed to make a conclusive experiment. So he wrote out the names afresh, but only put eleven into the bag, keeping the other one (with the name of Jesus) in his hand. The ape searched the bag, but refused to take any paper out of it. The papers were thrust upon him, but he tore them to pieces in fury. The king then asked him where was the right paper, and the ape caught hold of the Court official's hand, which was clutching the slip on which had been written the name of the founder of the Christian religion. "The king was troubled," wrote Sir Thomas Roe, "and keeps the ape. Yet this was acted in public before thousands, but where the abuse (trick) was, or whether there were any, I judge not."

Not only the Great Mughal, but his principal ministers and courtiers showed distinguished hospitality to King James's envoy and his secretary-chaplain, the Rev. Edward Terry. Here is a description of a dinner party at Asaf Khan's. Asaf and his guests were seated on the ground

in a large room and in a triangle: Sir Thomas Roe on the right hand of Asaf Khan—a good distance from him—and Terry at the other point of the triangle, all of them on their haunches, and each one with his own separate dinner placed before him. The host, Asaf Khan, had sixty dishes of different kinds of food, Sir Thomas Roe seventy, and the Rev. Terry only fifty. All these dishes were set down at once, with little paths left between them so that the servants could walk in between and hand the dishes one after the other. The Rev. Terry found it uncomfortable sitting so long cross-legged!

After the long stay at Ajmere it became necessary for Roe, whose negotiations were constantly impeded by the greedy sons or ministers of the emperor, to follow the Great Mughal, as the latter went on expeditions and lived under canvas.

In the great camps of the Mughals the emperor's tents were red; so also were the tents of the emperor's wives, sons, and relations. They were, besides, much larger than the white tents of the non-royal personages, so that being placed in the middle of the camp they could be seen from any direction. They were huge in size and the space they enclosed enormous. It was necessary for them to afford room not only for the emperor, but for his wives, children, women servants, and eunuchs. The quarters of the Mughal were separated from the rest by great screens about 10 feet high, made of strong cotton cloth stiffened with bamboos. On the outer side of these screens were ranged rows of armed soldiers, who kept constant watch and ward night and day. Similar screens shut off the tented enclosures of the great Court personages. At each fresh encampment the screens were arranged in precisely the same manner, so as to constitute lanes and streets and

mark off bazaars or marketplaces. Consequently although the encampment might be shifted from day to day one had the sensation each night of returning to a permanent city with streets that had not changed their direction.

The imperial standard of the Great Mughal was like that of modern Persia, a rising sun, designed as a human face, with a corona of spikes and flames, and in front a lion couchant.

The emperor's wives, on occasions of Court ceremony, progressed from place to place on elephants, seated inside turrets of gold or gilt, with gratings of gold wire and canopies of silver cloth.

Sir Thomas Roe returned to England from India in 1619 by the *Anne*, passing round the Cape of Good Hope. He was received by King James at Hampton Court in September, 1619, and presented His Majesty with two antelopes, a "strange and beautiful kind of red deer", a rich tent, rare carpets, certain umbrellas, and such like trinkets from the Great Mogul. He also brought a letter from the Emperor Jahangir written in Persian, and commending the English ambassador. The emperor was ready enough to sign this letter, but could not make up his mind where to appose the great seal. If at the bottom of the letter, it might seem like too much humility on his part; if at the top, it might prove distasteful to King James. Therefore he sent the great seal (made of silver) separately, so that the King of Great Britain might fasten it to the letter in what position he chose. On this seal was engraved the pedigree of Jahangir as far back as Timur, from whom he reckoned himself descended in the seventh degree.

Sir Thomas Roe did not return from India enriched by



his journey, and he seems to have been treated by the Company rather shabbily. Nevertheless, the king appreciated his services, and sent him as ambassador to Constantinople. He continued to hold high diplomatic appointments down to 1640, when he became a privy councillor and member of Parliament for Oxford. After the rupture between Charles I and the English Parliament he retired to live quietly in his house in the country, where he died in 1644.

In some way associated with Roe's mission to the Great Mughal was TOM or THOMAS CORYAT, of Odcombe, Somersetshire; a remarkable character at the beginning of the seventeenth century, almost transposed there from twentieth-century times. He became for a time an amusing butt or court fool in the household of Prince Henry, eldest son of James I. He had a passion for pedestrian journeys, and had walked over much of Western Europe by 1611. In 1612 he walked from Calais to Constantinople, and thence made his way on foot through Asia Minor to Aleppo. From Syria he made excursions on foot to the cities of Palestine and Persia, from which country he travelled by ship to India, where he was looked upon as the English "fakir" or mad saint. He was introduced by Sir Thomas Roe to the presence of the Great Mughal, and addressed that monarch a long speech in Persian, receiving in return a somewhat contemptuous gift of a hundred rupis. He started out to walk back to England by way of Afghanistan, Tatary, Persia, Syria, Egypt, Abyssinia (?), and North Africa; but got no farther than Surat, where he died of dysentery in December, 1617, partly through the English traders at that place forcing him to drink too much sherry! Coryat, if eccentric, was in his ideas far in advance of his times—in reality a very clever man.

## CHAPTER IX

### India in the Seventeenth Century

It may be interesting at this stage to give some idea of the condition of India during the seventeenth century, chiefly from the accounts of English and French travellers. During all this period the Mughal power—really a great Persian monarchy over India, with Persian as the Court tongue—was at its supreme height, despite occasional family feuds and episodes of civil war. The Mughal emperors of this period were Akbar the Great (and Tolerant), who tolerated all forms of religious faith, and was scarcely a strict Muhammadan; his son Jahangir, already described in the last chapter; Shah Jahan, who succeeded his father Jahangir in 1628; and Aurangzeb, the younger son of Shah Jahan, who seized the throne in 1658, and who reigned till 1707. During this period the Mughal power extended over all India from Baluchistan to the frontier of Burma, and from the Himalayas and parts of Afghanistan to Malabar.

Outside the limits of the Mughal power the Portuguese had established themselves at Goa, and retained a few posts on the western coast of India, of which Bombay was to be ceded to the English in 1665. In Southern and South-eastern India their place was gradually taken by the Dutch and the French East India Companies, especially that founded by Colbert in 1644. The Dutch and the Danes, besides the English, founded trading establish-

ments in Eastern India and Bengal. The overland route to India via Turkey and Persia was more and more abandoned in favour of the all-sea route round the Cape of Good Hope, though for a long time to come the time and health lost on this long and stormy voyage made India seem far removed from Europe.

FRANÇOIS PYRARD DE LAVAL, a French traveller in the early part of the seventeenth century, describes the Portuguese, Spanish, French, and Italian ships as being "mighty foul and stinking" owing to the dirty habits of the seamen, and even of the officers. On the other hand, he declares that the ships of the English and the Hollanders were scrupulously cleanly.

The Portuguese, though they circulated far and wide over India, and in particular settled in Bengal and on the coasts of Chittagong, and at first made a deep impression on the Mughal emperors and Hindu rajas by their stately manners and heroic bravery, gradually created a strong feeling of dread and dislike against them, which gave the Protestant Dutch and English a chance of gaining the favour or alliance of native princes, and displacing the Portuguese as the leading European people in the Indies.

This also arose through their setting up the Inquisition at Goa in 1560, under archbishops who lived in great pomp and had powers almost equal to those of the viceroy. The Inquisition was supposed only to deal with Christians who had lapsed from their faith or who had become heretical in their opinions. The mass of the Hindus and Muhammadans were left undisturbed, provided they had never made any show of adhesion to Christianity; but occasionally some native potentate, like the unfortunate Persian King of Hormuz, was burnt alive by the orders of the Inquisition, no doubt because he had pretended to





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become a Christian to please his conquerors, and had afterwards shown signs of relapse. The people most concerned, as a rule, were the Portuguese themselves, who for the slightest expression of heretical opinions were put to death. The Portuguese Jews, in order to escape persecution, pretended to be Christians. Any Englishman, Dutchman, or other foreigner suspected of adhesion to the principles of some Protestant sect was persecuted. The proceedings of the Inquisition were directed by two priests, one of whom was the superior of the other, and was called the Great Inquisitor. So much dread was inspired by this institution that no one in public spoke of it except with very great honour and respect (writes Pyrard de Laval), and if by chance anyone uttered an impatient expression regarding the Inquisition, his only chance of safety was to go and denounce himself and receive pardon; otherwise, if he was denounced by anyone else, he was at once arrested, and all persons arrested had their property seized on behalf of the Inquisition, which more often attacked rich than poor people. "It was a terrible and fearful thing," according to de Laval, to be had up before the Inquisition, for "you had no protector or advocate to speak for you". The Inquisitors were at once judges, prosecuting counsel, and advocates for the defence. Very often people arrested on suspicion were kept prisoners for two or three years without even knowing what they were accused of, in solitary confinement, seeing no fellow creature but the officers of the Inquisition, but (if very poor) maintained at the expense of the State. "The slightest word, whether of a child or of a slave who wished to do his master a bad turn, was enough to hang a man "especially if he was known to be of Jewish origin".

Upon one or other of the great feast days the wretched

prisoners of the Inquisition, whose fate had been decided, were led out to the cathedral, there to make what was called the *Auto da fé* or Act of Faith. They were all dressed alike in shirts steeped in sulphur and painted with flames of fire. Those that were to be burnt to death had the flames directed upwards, those that were to be let off with their lives had the flames directed downwards. After attending a service and hearing a sermon in the cathedral, they were next conducted to the open space or square of St. Lazarus, and here the condemned were burnt to death in the presence of the others.

But outside the ecclesiastical tyranny of Goa, Portuguese adventurers ranged far and wide over Central and Southern India, Burma, and Malaysia, and did much to draw attention to the diamonds of South Central India.

It is related in one of the early papers of the Royal Society that about 1610 a Portuguese gentleman went from Goa to Wajra Karur<sup>1</sup> in the Bellari district (Golkonda), and there spent the equivalent of several thousand pounds in searching for diamonds without success. He had gradually sold everything he possessed, even his clothes, and on the last day on which he could pay the wages of the workmen he had prepared a cup of poison, which he intended to take that night if no diamonds were found. But that evening a fine stone of about 434.7 carats was found by the workmen and brought to him, worth a good deal more than the money he had expended. It is probable that in this mine at Karur the Koh-i-Nūr was found.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The largest diamonds ever obtained in India seem to have been got from this mine of Karur, where it was reported that one of them weighed 9 ounces troy. This mine is now exhausted.

<sup>2</sup> The Koh-i-Nūr, or Mountain of Light, when it left the mines of Golkonda is supposed to have weighed 800 carats (more than 7 ounces). It came into the possession of the Mughal Emperor, Shah Jahan, about 1650. The emperor employed a Venetian

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There were said to be at least twenty-three diamond mines in the district of Golkonda, and fifteen in the neighbourhood of Bijapur.

All round the place where the diamonds existed the soil was sandy, full of rocks and jungle. In these rocks were many veins, some of half a finger in width, some of a whole finger, and the miners had irons, crooked at the ends, which they thrust into the veins in order to draw from them the sand or earth. This sand they placed in vessels, and herein they found the diamonds. Sometimes they were obliged to break the rocks; but always did so following the direction of the veins. After they had opened them out and removed the earth or sand, they would wash this two or three times and search it for whatever diamonds it contained. It was in this mine that the cleanest and whitest-watered diamonds were found. But not infrequently the men in their impatience struck such blows at the rocks, in order to extract the sand, that they fractured diamonds, which could only be sold in a flawed condition.

As to the government of the diamond-mining districts, it seems to have been conducted with freedom and fidelity. Two per cent on all purchases was paid to the King of Golkonda, who also received a royalty for permission to mine. Merchants having obtained this permission

jeweller, Borgis, to cut it, but this operation was carried out so wastefully that its weight was reduced to 279 carats, a result which so enraged Shah Jahan that instead of paying the jeweller for his trouble he fined him 10,000 rupis. The next emperor, Aurangzeb, at last placed this splendid rose-cut diamond in the famous Peacock throne at Delhi. Throne and diamond were carried off to Persia by the great raider, Nadir Shah. Nadir Shah was assassinated in 1747, and after his death his Afghan treasurer, Ahmad Abdallah Shah retreated to Afghanistan with the Koh-i-Nūr and other treasure. Ahmad founded the Durani ruling house of Afghanistan, and the Koh-i-Nūr descended thus to Shah Suja the dethroned Durani Amir of Afghanistan, who fled for protection to Ranjit Singh, the Sikh King of the Panjab. Ranjit Singh took the Koh-i-Nūr from his guest, and after Ranjit's death and the fall of the Sikh monarchy the jewel was seized by the British, and has long been amongst the crown jewels of the British monarch.



## Pioneers in India

would take up an area of about 200 yards in circumference and put to work on it about fifty miners, or more if they wished to work rapidly. From the day on which they commenced mining, till they finished, they paid a duty of about 15s. a day for fifty men, and more proportionately to the numbers over that. The miners were actually paid only £1, 4s. a year, though they were required to be men thoroughly understanding their work! Naturally, on such miserable pay, whenever possible they concealed diamonds and kept them for themselves, not hesitating, if need be, to swallow the stones. In some cases they concealed them in the corners of their eyes; but all the time they were at work they were closely watched by overseers. If they found a stone of any importance in weight or lustre they received a small reward.

The English were not long in finding their way to this kingdom of Golkonda, and the diamond mines of South Central India were first visited by the English in 1622, when three employés of the East India Company arrived there—Methold, Socory, and Thomason. The prospects of obtaining enormous wealth in this hunt for precious stones even attracted Roman Catholic missionaries, not so much with the bait of personal gain as the hope of obtaining enormous sums for raising churches, cathedrals, hospitals, and seminaries; for all through this seventeenth century, in spite of the hated Inquisition at Goa, there was a time of tolerance for the Christian propaganda, and missionaries began to swarm over Southern India, Mughal India, and Tibet. It is true that they were more frequently (in the seventeenth century and later) German, Dutch, and French, the Portuguese having become disliked.

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It is recorded by Tavernier that Jesuits occasionally travelled about India disguised as fakirs, native pilgrims, or saints. Their garb consisted of the skin of the tiger worn on the back, and the skin of a goat hanging down over the front to the knees. For a cap they had the skin of a lamb, the four feet of which fell on the forehead, neck, and ears. Their ears were pierced, and in them were inserted large rings of crystal. Their legs were naked. They wore wooden sandals on the feet, and carried a bundle of peacocks' feathers to fan themselves with and drive away the flies. They were accused by the Portuguese and Dutch of smuggling diamonds out of the country when travelling about in this disguise.

During the seventeenth century European trading interests grew apace. Besides the Dutch East India Company, of which something has been already said, and the English, of which there is much more to be related, the French Government had assisted to found a Chartered Company to trade with India and the East in 1604. This did not come to much. Other French companies were organized in 1611 and 1615. The company founded by Cardinal Richelieu in 1642 led to the colonization of Mauritius and Bourbon, and to settlements on the coast of Madagascar. Finally, under the Chartered Company of 1644, organized by the minister Colbert, a number of important stations were founded on the coasts of India.

The Danish Government chartered a company to trade with India and the Far East in 1612 (remodelled in 1670), but the conduct of the ship captains in charge of the operations in Bengal was so "witless" (as contemporary travellers remarked), and the opposition of the English, French, and Dutch so great, that Denmark did not obtain much hold over South-eastern India during the seven-

teenth century, though in the eighteenth she established stations at Tranquebar (Koromandel), at Serampore, near Calcutta, and at various points on the Southern Malabar coast.

The salaries of the English Company's officials in the middle of the seventeenth century were so small that they could hardly have subsisted without having some private opportunities for trade. The writers or clerks had to serve for five years with only £10 a year (besides food and lodging). The factors or heads of factories had a salary of £20 a year, and superior officials directing the commerce, £40 a year. The president of a group of forts or factories [of whom in time there came into being three, for the three Presidencies of Madras, Bengal, and Bombay] received a salary of £500 a year, but had to give a bond to the Company of £5000, and to submit to half his year's salary being retained at home, to be confiscated in case of misdemeanour!

Although, after Sir Thomas Roe's embassy, the English were well treated in the dominions ruled by the Mughal emperors, these last had little or no power at sea, and were quite unable to restrain the attacks on commerce which went on during the seventeenth century by the Magh pirates on the northern coasts of the Bay of Bengal (the Maghs were often half-caste Portuguese), or the Malabar pirates of Southern India. These last were probably of the Mopla (Muhammadan) tribe of to-day, and anciently of Arab descent. The pirate captains seldom ventured farther out to sea than 60 or 70 miles. Each vessel might contain as many as two hundred fighting men, and the pirates generally travelled in squadrons of ten to fifteen vessels, especially when intending to attack a big ship (they directed their attacks chiefly against the Portuguese).

They had no artillery themselves, but did not fear cannon. Their practice was to sail up to the vessel they wished to attack, as closely as possible, and throw a number of fire-pots on to the decks of the wooden ships in order to create a panic on board. After a time the ships of the Europeans prepared for these attacks by closing the scuttles on deck and covering the decks with water, so that the firepots (which were full of explosives) took no effect. On one occasion the pirates attacked an English ship off Cochin. They came out to the number, perhaps, of thirty vessels. The English captain, Clerc, despairing of saving his ship, prepared for it to be boarded by the pirates, and, as they leapt on board in great numbers, set fire to a fuse communicating with barrels of gunpowder. The deck of the ship was then blown up, killing a large number of the pirates who were on it. Nevertheless, after the first shock, others continued to come on board. Meantime the captain had sent his crew off in two boats, which remained as near to the ship as possible, while he was alone in his cabin ready with a match to set fire to a train of powder which led to the principal magazine of the ship. When he saw the thing was hopeless he fired the powder and leapt into the sea, where he was picked up by his crew. Soon afterwards his vessel blew up, and in all about twelve hundred of the Malabari pirates were killed; but the brave English captain and his men, forty in number, were taken prisoners. They were ransomed by the Zamorin of Calicut, for fear they should be killed by the shore population, who had become infuriated by the twelve hundred widows, whose husbands had lost their lives in the attack. Eventually this ransom was repaid by the English Company, and Captain Clerc and his men returned in safety to Surat.

The Mughal emperors were not only fond of sport and

of wine drinking, but they were greatly enamoured of beauty in all its forms—beautiful wives (to whom often they were tenderly attached), handsome attendants about their courts, magnificent wild beasts, and birds of rich plumage in their gardens and aviaries, jewels of fire and lustre, carpets of exquisite tints and artistic patterns, and, above all, palaces, mosques, tombs, summer houses, and castles of imposing or delicate architecture, and often of a degree of finish which, as in the case of the Citadel of Agra, has preserved them to this day (thanks to the care taken by the British Government) as some of the most beautiful expressions of Muhammadan art. Shah Jahan was the most noteworthy among the Mughals for the buildings erected during his reign. To him we owe most of the lovely marble edifices (including the Pearl Mosque) of the fort at Agra, and the celebrated mosque tomb—the Taj Mahal—erected over the remains of his much-loved wife, Mumtaz-Mahal. He built the Great Mosque at Delhi, and the palaces of unsurpassed beauty at that place. In the Divan-i-am or Court of Public Audience at Delhi he placed his wonderful Peacock throne, described by Tavernier the French traveller (see pp. 239–40), as being in the shape of a bed, 6 feet by 4 feet, with twelve columns supporting a canopy, the whole structure resting on four golden feet 24 inches high. The back of the bed was formed by two figures of peacocks with outspread tails, the colours of the birds being rendered as far as possible by inlaid precious stones—sapphires, emeralds, rubies, pearls, &c. Splendid rows of pearls decorated the columns. The total value of the throne was reckoned at £6,000,000.

The Mughals, perhaps because of their relations with Persia—the “Land of the Lion and the Sun” (an emblem chosen for the Mughal standard)—displayed in their hunt-



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ing sports much more interest in the lion than in the tiger, which last was always more especially the favourite carnivore of the Hindus. In the seventeenth century the lion was still abundant in north-western India, Gujarat, and even the Dekkan, and was the principal quarry of the Imperial hunting parties. Many stories are told, in the books of French and English travellers, of the Mughal emperors and their adventures with lions. Here is one of them.

Once out hunting, Jahangir espied a lion lying asleep amongst the bushes. He called for a musket, and supporting the barrel of it on the shoulder of one of his noblemen, took careful aim and shot the lion. The lion, being wounded, rushed furiously at the emperor; but the nobleman, who was a Rajput (Hindu) named Anuprai, stepped in front of the emperor. The lion, however, would not meddle with Anuprai, striving to reach the man who had fired the gun. But the young Rajput wrestled with him, even putting his arm through the lion's jaws, and thus saved the emperor until his sons and courtiers could come up and kill the beast. The brave young Rajput received thirty-two wounds; but the emperor put him into his own litter, and with his own hands wiped, and dressed, and bound up his wounds. He recovered from them, and in reward for his services received the title of Lion-cleaver, was presented with a sword, and given command over a thousand cavalry, with a pension equivalent to £1000 a year.

The French traveller, Bernier, gives this description of a lion hunt near Lahor, in the reign of the emperor Aurangzeb (about 1664). "As a preliminary step, an ass is tied near the spot where the gamekeepers have ascertained the lion retires. The wretched animal is soon devoured, and after so ample a meal the lion never seeks



for other prey, but without molesting either oxen, sneep, or shepherds, goes in quest of water, and after quenching his thirst, returns to his former place of retirement. He sleeps until the next morning, when he finds and devours another ass, which the gamekeepers have brought to the same spot. In this way they contrive, during several days, to allure the lion and to attach him to one place; and when information is received of the king's approach, they fasten at the spot an ass where so many others have been sacrificed, down whose throat a large quantity of opium has been forced. This last meal is, of course, intended to produce a soporific effect upon the lion. The next operation is to spread, by means of the peasantry of the adjacent villages, large nets, made on purpose, which are gradually drawn closer, in the manner practised in hunting the nilghais. Everything being in this state of preparation, the king appears on an elephant protected in places with thin plates of iron, and attended by the Grand Master of the Hunt, some Omras (noblemen) mounted on elephants, and a great number both of guards on horseback and of gamekeepers on foot, armed with half-pikes. He immediately approaches the net on the outside, and fires at the lion with a large musketoon. The wounded animal makes a spring at the elephant, according to the invariable practice of lions, but is arrested by the net; and the king continues to discharge his musketoon, until the lion is at length killed.

“It happened, however, during the last hunt, that the enraged animal leaped over the net, rushed upon a trooper whose horse he killed, and then effected his escape for a time. Being pursued by the huntsmen, he was at length found and again enclosed in nets. The whole army was on that occasion subjected to great inconveniencies and

thrown into a considerable degree of confusion. We remained three or four days patrolling in a country intersected with torrents from the mountains, and covered with underwood, and long grass that nearly concealed the camels. No bazaars had been formed and there were no towns or villages near the army. Happy those who during this scene of disorder could satisfy the cravings of hunger! Shall I explain the weighty reason of this long detention in such abominable quarters? You must know, then, that as it is considered a favourable omen when the king kills a lion, so is the escape of that animal portentous of infinite evil to the state. Accordingly, the termination of the hunt is attended with much grave ceremony. The king being seated in the general assembly of the Omras, the dead lion is brought before him, and when the carcass has been accurately measured and minutely examined, it is recorded in the royal archives that such a king on such a day slew a lion of such a size and of such a skin, whose teeth were of such a length, and whose claws were of such dimensions, and so on down to the minutest details."

At much the same period another French traveller, Tavernier (whose journeys will be shortly alluded to), gave the following description of lion taming in India. The process took above five or six months to accomplish and was done in this way. The trainers tied the lions, at twelve paces distance from each other, by their hind feet, to a cord attached to a large wooden post firmly planted in the ground. Another cord was fastened about the lion's neck which the lion-master held in his hand. The posts were planted in a straight line, and upon another parallel one, from fifteen to twenty paces distant, the men stretched another cord of the length of the space which the lions

occupied when arranged as above. These two cords which held the lion fastened by his two hind feet, permitted him to rush up to this long cord, which served as a limit to those outside it, beyond which they might not venture to pass when harassing and irritating the lions by throwing small stones or little bits of wood at them. A number of people would come to this spectacle. When the provoked lion jumped towards the cord, he was pulled back by the rope round his neck, which the lion-master held in his hand. "It was by this means that they accustomed the lion by degrees to become tame with people, and on my arrival at Sidhpur I witnessed this spectacle without leaving my carriage."

An interesting light is thrown on the condition of India under the Emperor Aurangzeb by the journals of Thomas Bowrey, published by the Hakluyt Society in 1905.

THOMAS BOWREY was the sailing-master (pilot or mate) of the great ships sent out by the East India Company round the Cape of Good Hope in the last half of the seventeenth century. He seems to have spent nineteen years in India and Further India, the latter part of the time as independent trader, between 1669 and 1688. He died at Stepney in the spring of 1713, at "Wellclose Square". The small property which he left to his wife was by her dedicated to the building of almshouses, and the distribution of money under the "Bowrey Charity" to poor seamen and their widows of various specified parishes at the east end of London. The income of this Charity is still distributed by the Rector of Stepney and a committee. Bowrey, whose subsequent journeys probably included visits to the west coast of Africa, and certainly voyages to Arctic America and South America, extended

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his survey of Southern Asia from the Persian Gulf to Borneo.

He visited India at a time when the Emperor Aurangzeb, a fanatical Muhammadan, was reversing the policy which had come into force under his grandfather Akbar of tolerating all religions. In 1669 Aurangzeb was issuing orders for the destruction of Hindu schools and temples, and was authorizing the persecution of Syrian, Jacobite, and Armenian Christians. No longer were Hindus allowed to command the Imperial armies. Although it was impossible to suppress the Hindu religion, its exercise had to be carried on at considerable danger, and only by means of paying large sums into the Imperial treasury or bribing local Muhammadan governors. It was this change of policy on the part of Aurangzeb which was the principal cause of the revival of Hindu energy among the Marathas and Rajputs, as will be described in a later chapter.

Bowrey gives the following description of the great pagoda or temple of Jagannāth.<sup>1</sup>

This temple was situated at Puri, on the south coast of Orissa (Eastern India), and was a magnificent white building, probably consisting mainly of marble. It was in shape like a huge barrel set on end, about 130 feet in altitude (modern measurements make the roof 192 feet high). Advancing from the north-west part of the wall of this circular building into the middle was a large stone image of a bull, the hinder part of which was fixed to the north-west wall, while the head faced the south-east. This immense bull, nearly twice the size of a live one, was carved out of a single block of stone. As to the idol itself,

<sup>1</sup> This is the name (pronounced with an aspirated *t*, Jagannāt-h) which was rendered Juggernaut in the English of a hundred years ago. The right rendering of the name is Jagan-nātha, corrupted generally into Janganāth. The name really means Lord of the World, and the god is said to be only another manifestation of Vishnu.

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it was kept in a large dark chamber or chapel, and was about the life size of a man. It was of massive gold, richly wrought, and its eyes were two diamonds of exceeding value, which are declared to have given out so much lustre that the place was as light as though there were two candles burning. (According to a later description, written at the close of the eighteenth century by ALEXANDER HAMILTON,<sup>1</sup> this figure of Jagannāth was covered from the shoulders with a great mantle which hung down to the altar below. The mantle was of tissue of gold or silver, according to the nature of the festival it celebrated. The feet of the statue were at first hidden under the cloak, for according to tradition, when the idol was first set up it had neither hands nor feet. But these were afterwards made of wood and covered with mother-of-pearl. The head and body were of sandalwood.)

On great festivals, when the temple (which maintained some twelve hundred Brahman priests) was resorted to by about one hundred and fifty thousand people, another figure or effigy of Jaganāth was taken out and placed with great ceremony on an enormous car four stories high, mounted on from eight to ten wheels, and capable of containing two hundred persons. This car was made of very solid wood and iron, and richly carved with the shapes of men and women dancing, of satyrs, bulls, bears, tigers, elephants, rhinoceroses, &c. It was of immense weight; and although fitted upon six to eight good axletrees and strong wheels, it required more than a hundred strong men to draw it along upon hard and smooth ground. Nevertheless, it was so drawn down a broad street  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles long by 50 yards wide. An immense cable,

<sup>1</sup> Alexander Hamilton was an East Indian trader who travelled much in India in the last half of the eighteenth century, and wrote on its history and geography.

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40 inches in circumference, was fastened to the front and sides of the car, and to this rope or cable were tied smaller ropes at intervals, each about 18 feet long. In this manner about two thousand people were able to pull the cable by its subsidiary ropes and so drag the car along.

It is related by Bowrey, and the statement was repeated by later travellers, that at these great festivals, when there was an enormous concourse of people, some of them would throw themselves down before the wheels of the car and so become crushed to death. The truth of these statements was afterwards denied: it was said that Jaganāth representing Vishnu, whose worship implied great reverence for living things and a horror of inflicting death, it was not likely that these suicides of fanatics would be allowed. Nevertheless, they seem to have taken place at intervals down to the early part of the nineteenth century.

Tavernier, the great French traveller in India in the latter half of the seventeenth century (see pp. 239-40) gives the following description of a Hindu temple at Benares, probably dedicated to Siva, the third member of the original Hindu trinity of gods, of which Brahma was the supreme god of gods—the Creator, and Vishnu (Jaganāth) was the Preserver; Siva being the Destroyer and Reproducer.

In front of the door of this great temple of Siva, at the holy city of Benares on the Ganges, there was to be seen a gallery sustained by pillars, whereon many people were already assembled at the time of Tavernier's visit—men, women, and children—awaiting the opening of the door. When the gallery and a part of the court were full of people, eight Brahmans approached, four on each side of the door of the pagoda, each carrying a censer; there were also many other Brahmans, making a great noise with drums and other instruments. The two eldest of the

Brahmans chanted a canticle, and all the people, after they had intoned it, repeated the same while singing and playing instruments, each one waving a peacock's tail, or other kind of fan, to drive away the flies; so that when the door of the temple ("pagoda") was opened the idol might not be inconvenienced by these insects. All this fanning and music lasted a good half-hour, then the two principal Brahmans began to sound two large bells three times, and, with a small mallet, they knocked at the great door. Immediately it was opened by six priests, who were inside the temple, and seven or eight paces from the door an altar was to be seen with an idol upon it, called Ram Kam, the sister of "Morli Ram". This goddess had on her right side a child in the form of a cupid, known as "Lakshmi", and on her left arm she carried a small girl called "the goddess Sita".<sup>1</sup> As soon as the door of the temple was opened, and after a large curtain had been drawn and the people present had seen the idol, all threw themselves on the ground, placing their hands upon their heads and prostrating themselves three times; then, having risen, they threw a quantity of bouquets and flower chains in form of chaplets, which the Brahmans placed in contact with the idol, and then returned to the people. An old Brahman, who was in front of the altar, held in his hand a lamp with nine lighted wicks, upon which, from time to time, he threw a kind of incense when approaching the lamp towards the idol. All these ceremonies lasted about an hour, after which the people retired, and the temple was closed. The people presented the idol with a quantity of rice, flour, butter, oil, and milk, of which the Brahmans let nothing be lost. As this idol (? Rama

<sup>1</sup> Both Lakshmi and Sita were different forms of the goddess of beauty, who was invented to be a wife to Vishnu, or to his re-incarnation as Rama or Krishna.

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Kama) had the form of a woman, all the women invoked her, and regarded her as their patron; this was the reason why the temple was always crowded with women and children.

The Raja of Benares, wrote Tavernier, in order to have this idol in the temple attached to his house and to get it from the great temple, had expended in gifts to the Brahmans and in alms to the poor more than five lakhs (500,000) of rupis, equivalent then to about £50,000 in our money.

"On the other side of the street in which this College is situated, there is another pagoda called Richourdas, from the name of the idol on the altar inside, and lower down on another small altar is the idol whom they call Goupaldas,<sup>1</sup> brother of this Richourdas. Only the faces of these idols, which are made of stone or wood, are exposed to view. They are black as jet, with the exception of the image of Morli Ram, which is in the great pagoda and is uncovered. As for the idol Ram Kam, which is in the pagoda of the Raja, it has two diamonds in the eyes which this prince has had placed there, together with a large necklace of pearls, and a canopy sustained by four silver pillars over its head" (Tavernier).

Thomas Bowrey describes in his journal that characteristic product of Eastern religions, the fakirs or holy beggars, half-mad people living what they believed to be a very holy life, by abjuring the possession of any property and by showing themselves completely indifferent to the affairs of this world. They wandered about perfectly safe,

<sup>1</sup> Gopala. This god (the name means "cowherd") was the youthful form of Krishna, a deity in the form of a handsome young man, and one of the incarnations of Vishnu. "Richourdas" is probably an extraordinary corruption in Tavernier's French of Krishna. The other idols with the syllable Ram in their names were probably forms of Rama, another manifestation of Vishnu or his wife.



so far as human beings were concerned, all over Southern Asia (though probably not straying far beyond the borders of India). As a rule they were quite naked, but daubed their bodies over with ashes or mud. They never cut or combed the hair, or shaved the face, nor pared their nails, which grew like the claws of birds. The hair of the head and body was thick and matted. Occasionally they wore a leopard's skin or a patched coat over the shoulders, and stuck peacocks' feathers in their hair, or wore necklaces of shells and pieces of rubbish or metal strung together. Some of them would have fastened round the neck an immense, flat, round plate of beaten iron, just a space in the middle to enclose the neck. This plate of iron would be riveted on by a blacksmith and could not be slipped over the head. The fakir wearing such a plate could never lie down; but must sleep and eat sitting, and even be fed by other people. Others would have themselves hung up by the arms, and continue in that position for years; so that their muscles and tendons hardened, and, if released, they would be unable to move the arms. Or they would clench their fists until the nails grew through the palm of the hand, or sit for years nodding their heads till this became a clocklike motion. Very often these miseries would be endured as the result of vows taken, the fakir pledging himself never to move from his uncomfortable position or to resume a life of ease until enough money had been subscribed to build a temple of a certain size. But if this end was ever achieved, they were probably not in a condition to resume ordinary life. In any case, they relied for their food and sustenance on the charity of the benevolent, which in India is of almost immeasurable quantity. A great many of them were simply sturdy beggars preferring a life without work,

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and tramping from village to village in their filth and nakedness, demanding, and always receiving, as much food as they required, and giving their blessings in return.

Bowrey went on horseback to see a widow burnt<sup>1</sup> at a little seaport town on the Madras coast. About half a mile from the town, on a green plain, a great fire was prepared in which was being burnt the body of the dead man. Near to his funeral pyre was a great deal of combustible matter, with a hollow in the middle in which fire was put. Close to it was standing a young woman "seeming extraordinary cheerful". Bowrey attempted to reason with her as to the act she was about to commit, but, the Brahmans or priests intervening, the woman hastened to assure him that it was the happiest hour of her life. But the quickness of her speech and other signs showed that she was in an almost desperate condition. Upon this the priests gave her some drug which stilled this excitement. Then "this silly creature, with the most cheerful, smiling countenance, lifted up her hands, saluted her friends, especially the priests, and, looking earnestly upon me, gave me some white and yellow flowers, which she took from the hair of her head, which was beautifully adorned, . . . and with strange nimbleness sprang into the fire. Whereupon, to make the ceremony seem more pleasant, they at that instant tuned up several sorts of music, and shouted to such a degree that not one screech of the woman in torment could be heard. Many of the bystanders kept throwing on much more combustible things, such as dry faggots, oil, butter, dry palm leaves, and the like."

One good\*thing that the intolerance of Aurangzeb

<sup>1</sup> For other allusions to "Satti" or the burning of widows see pp. 37, 138, 139.

effected was constant interference by the Muhammadans in this abominable practice of burning women after the death of their husbands. Sometimes English seamen, landed from their ships, would arrive on such an occasion, and, putting all nice proprieties on one side, would snatch these unhappy young widows from the very flames, and place them in safety in some English fort.

In some parts of the Koromandel coast the woman did not burn her body for her deceased husband, but allowed herself to be buried alive close to the grave of her husband. Usually she was buried in the ground up to the neck, and was then strangled by the Brahmans, or else a sandy plot would be selected, in which a hole was dug for the reception of the dead body and the living woman. The friends who assisted at the ceremony would then fill up this hole with basketfuls of sand until the head of the woman was covered for at least 6 inches. They then jumped and danced upon the place until they considered that the woman was dead.

Tobacco, though introduced into India by the Turks and Persians at the beginning of the seventeenth century, had not spread much in the usages and customs of the people, and *bhang* or hemp was the herb which served as a narcotic. As a substance for smoking in pipes, hemp preceded tobacco in Asia and Africa by about a thousand years. Bowrey describes this "admirable herb" as being much in use amongst all the natives of India in the seventeenth century. There were two sorts of hemp used for smoking or chewing; one—the ganja—was prepared from the young leaves and flowers, and the other—the bhang—from the old leaves and seed vessels. One or other of these kinds of narcotic was mixed with tobacco and smoked, or was chewed. Or the most pleasant way of

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taking it (writes Bowrey) was to grind a handful of seed and leaf together, mix it with fresh water, and let it soak for a quarter of an hour, then strain it through a piece of calico and drink it off. In less than half an hour it would begin to take effect, and the person drinking it would continue in a state of semi-intoxication for the space of four or five hours. "If he should have taken it at a time when he was naturally merry, anything or nothing would provoke him to exceeding great laughter." On the other hand, if in a melancholy state when taking the drug, he would give way to the most terrible depression of spirits. Its effects generally passed off with the most profuse perspiration.

In the same century—the seventeenth—in which tobacco was introduced into India in rivalry to hemp-smoking, the opium habit became established, largely through Arab traders. Both the hemp plant and the opium poppy are natives of Western or Temperate Asia.

During the seventeenth century the fame of French physicians and surgeons began to reach the ears of Oriental and African potentates. They replaced in general estimation the doctors of Italy in the sixteenth century, and the Moorish and Greek physicians of earlier periods. Remarkable amongst these French doctors of medicine and the Oriental travellers and pioneers of the seventeenth century was FRANÇOIS BERNIER, who was born in Anjou in September, 1620. He studied at the University of Montpellier, in Southern France, and took his degree as doctor of medicine there in 1652. He soon evinced a great desire to travel, and made a rather remarkable little expedition to Palestine and Syria in 1654.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Through all the records of the seventeenth century one is struck with the facility with which Europeans were able to travel in and through the Muhammadan world

## Pioneers in India

Bernier wished first of all to explore Abyssinia and make use of his position as a doctor of medicine to penetrate that country. He had already arrived in Egypt in 1656, and had survived an attack of plague at Rosetta; but after reaching Mokha, at the southern end of the Red Sea, he gave up his idea of going to Abyssinia, and took a passage in an Indian vessel sailing for Surat, which he reached in the surprisingly short time of three weeks from Mokha, at the beginning of 1659. On his way to Agra to visit that splendid capital of the Great Mughal, he was picked up by Dara, the eldest, and afterwards the very unfortunate, son of Shah Jahan. Dara, who was flying to the west from conflict with his brother, Aurangzeb, compelled Bernier to go with him as his physician; but owing to the attacks of robbers they parted company, and eventually one of the Mughal officers of state (the Nawab Danishmand Khan) took pity on Bernier, and enabled him to reach Delhi<sup>1</sup> safely, where he found Aurangzeb established as emperor.

Here, apparently, he entered into the service, if not of Aurangzeb, at any rate of the Nawab who had rescued him from his difficulties after the flight of Dara. And consequently, when Aurangzeb decided to pay a visit to the Panjab, and still more to Kashmir, for the benefit of his health; and in order to avoid the terrible heat of summer on the plains of India, Bernier was more or less obliged to accompany the Court. He thus describes (in Irving Brock's

during this period, as though there was then a very distinct abatement of dislike to Europeans, and the Christians in general, on the part of Muhammadans. People seem to have thought scarcely more in this century of running over to North Africa, Egypt, Asia Minor, Syria, and Palestine than they do in the twentieth century; and taking into consideration the absence of steam as a motive power, they seem to have got about remarkably well and quickly in sailing vessels, and on land by means of horses and camels.

<sup>1</sup> The proper spelling, and the real pronunciation, of the name of this famous city of the Mughals is Dihli or Dilli.

translation of his works) the process by which the Great Mughal journeyed to Kashmir.

“The king left this city on the sixth of December at three o'clock in the afternoon; a day and hour which, according to the astrologers of Delhi, cannot fail to prove propitious to long journeys. Having reached Shah-limar, his country villa, which is about two leagues distant from the capital, he remained there six whole days in order to afford time for the preparations required by an expedition which was to last eighteen months. We hear to-day that he has set out with the intention of encamping on the Lahor road, and that after two days he will pursue his journey without further delay.

“He is attended not only by the thirty-five thousand cavalry which at all times compose his bodyguard, and by infantry exceeding ten thousand in number, but likewise by the heavy artillery and the light or stirrup-artillery, so called because it is inseparable from the king's person, which the large pieces of ordnance must occasionally quit for the highroads, in order that they may proceed with greater facility. The heavy artillery consists of seventy pieces, mostly of brass. Many of these cannon are so ponderous that twenty yoke of oxen are necessary to draw them along; and some, when the road is steep or rugged, require the aid of elephants, in addition to the oxen, to push the carriage wheels with their heads and trunks. The stirrup-artillery is composed of fifty or sixty small field pieces, all of brass; each mounted, as I have observed elsewhere, on a small carriage of neat construction and beautifully painted, decorated with a number of red streamers, and drawn by two handsome horses, driven by an artilleryman. There is always a third or relay horse, which is led by an assistant gunner.

## Pioneers in India

These field pieces travel at a quick rate, so that they may be ranged in front of the royal tent in sufficient time to fire a volley as a signal to the troops of the king's arrival." . . . "I shall commence my journey" (continues Bernier<sup>1</sup>) "this very night, after having finally arranged all my affairs, and supplied myself with much the same necessities as if I were a cavalry officer of rank. As my pay is one hundred and fifty crowns per month, I am expected to keep two good Turkoman horses, and I also take with me a powerful Persian camel and driver, a groom for my horses, a cook and a servant to go before my horse with a flagon of water in his hand, according to the custom of the country. I am also provided with every useful article, such as a tent of moderate size, a carpet, a portable bed made of four very strong but light canes, a pillow, a couple of coverlets, one of which, twice doubled, serves for a mattress, a *soufra* or round leathern tablecloth used at meals, some few napkins of dyed cloth, three small bags with culinary utensils which are all placed in a large bag, and this bag is again carried in a very capacious and strong double sack or net made of leathern thongs. This double sack likewise contains the provisions, linen, and wearing apparel, both of master and servants. I have taken care to lay in a stock of excellent rice for five or six days' consumption, of sweet biscuits flavoured with anise, of limes and sugar. Nor have I forgotten a linen bag with its small iron hook for the purpose of suspending and draining *days* (milk curds); nothing being considered so refreshing in this country as lemonade and *days*."

Bernier was rejoiced at the prospect of reaching the

<sup>1</sup> The most accessible English version of Bernier's travels—a most interesting work—is that by Archibald Constable, 1891.

hill regions, where he would have pure water to drink and better bread than the bazaar bread of Delhi, "which is often badly baked and full of sand and dust". As to the water of Delhi, in the latter part of the seventeenth century it contained impurities which exceeded his powers of description, being accessible to all persons and animals, and the receptacle of every kind of filth. "Fevers most difficult to cure are engendered by it, and worms<sup>1</sup> are bred in the legs which produce violent inflammation, attended with much danger. If the patient leave Delhi, the worm is generally soon expelled, although there have been instances where it has continued in the system for a year or more. They are commonly of the size and length of the treble string of a violin, and might be easily mistaken for a sinew. In extracting them great caution should be used lest they break; the best way is to draw them out little by little, from day to day, gently winding them round a twig of the size of a pin." On the journey northwards the "higher sort of people" cooled the Ganges water they were carrying by pouring it into tin flagons, which for a space of seven or eight minutes were placed in water into which three or four handfuls of saltpetre had been thrown. The saltpetre made the water extremely cold, and thus cooled in its turn the Ganges water in the tin flagons.

The progress of the journey was so slow that it took the Court and Bernier two months to reach Lahor from Delhi; for the emperor would frequently diverge from the highway to shoot game in the high grass or to stay at places that offered pleasant recreation. Sometimes the Emperor Aurangzeb rode on horseback, more often he was carried on men's shoulders on a kind of portable

<sup>1</sup> The Guinea tape worm, met with in northern tropical Asia and Africa.



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throne or sedan chair, painted and gilt, and with glass windows and a roof. Or he might mount an elephant and sit on his back, either in an oval chair with a canopy superbly decorated with paint and gilt, or a castle or *mikdambar*, equivalent to the modern *hauda*. The emperor was accompanied by a large number of rajas, feudatory princes, and nobles, who found his expeditions most fatiguing, because out of respect for the emperor they were obliged to remain for hours on horseback exposed like any ordinary soldier to heat and dust, frequently from daybreak till three o'clock in the afternoon. When they could escape these duties they travel luxuriously enough, stretched on a litter or palki, often sleeping peacefully whilst they were carried along, and only being awakened when reaching their tents, where everything was ready for an excellent bath, and a refreshing meal afterwards. The princesses and great ladies of the seraglio had also different modes of travelling. Some preferred chauduls, which were borne on men's shoulders, and were not unlike the men's litters. They were gilt and painted and covered with magnificent silk nets of many colours, enriched with embroidery, fringes, and beautiful tassels. Others of the women travelled in a stately and closed palki (more like a sedan chair), gilt and covered, over which were also stretched similar silk nets. Some, again, used capacious beds, suspended between two powerful camels, or between two small elephants. "It is in this style", writes Bernier, "that I have sometimes seen Raushenara-Begum pursuing her journey, and have observed more than once in front of the litter, which was open, a young well-dressed female slave, with a peacock's tail in her hand, brushing away the dust, and keeping off the flies from the princess. The ladies are not un-

frequently carried on the backs of elephants, which upon these occasions wear massive bells of silver, and are decked with costly trappings, curiously embroidered. These lovely and distinguished females, seated in *mikdambars*, are thus elevated above the earth, like so many superior beings borne along through the middle region of the air. Each *mikdambar* contains eight women, four on a side; it is latticed and covered with a silken net, and yields not in richness and splendour to the chaudul or the takt-ravan (litter).

“I cannot avoid dwelling on this pompous procession of the seraglio. It strongly arrested my attention during the late march, and I feel delight in recalling it to my memory. Stretch imagination to its utmost limits, and you can conceive no exhibition more grand and imposing than when Raushenara-Begum, mounted on a stupendous Pegu elephant, and seated in a *mikdambar*, blazing with gold and azure, is followed by five or six other elephants with *mikdambars* nearly as resplendent as her own, and filled with ladies attached to her household. Close to the princess are the chief eunuchs, richly adorned and finely mounted, each with a wand of office in his hand; and surrounding her elephant, a troop of female servants, Tatars and Kashmiris, fantastically attired and riding handsome pad horses. Besides these attendants are several eunuchs on horseback, accompanied by a multitude of *pajis*, or lackeys on foot, with large canes, who advance a great way before the princess, both to the right and to the left, for the purpose of clearing the road and driving before them every intruder. Immediately behind Raushenara-Begum's retinue appears a principal lady of the Court, mounted and attended much in the same manner as the princess. This lady is followed by a third, she

by a fourth, and so on, until fifteen or sixteen females of quality pass with a grandeur of appearance, equipage, and retinue more or less proportionate to their rank, pay, and office. There is something very impressive of state and royalty in the march of these sixty or more elephants; in their solemn and, as it were, measured steps; in the splendour of the *mikdambars*, and the brilliant and innumerable followers in attendance."

It was with difficulty, he writes, that these ladies could be approached; they were almost inaccessible to the sight of man. Woe to any unlucky cavalier, however exalted in rank, who, meeting the procession, was found too near! Nothing could exceed the insolence of the tribes of eunuchs and footmen which he would have to encounter, and who eagerly availed themselves of such an opportunity to beat a man in the most unmerciful manner. Bernier himself was once nearly caught in a similar situation, and narrowly escaped the cruel treatment that other riders in the imperial train had experienced. Determined, however, not to suffer himself to be beaten, and perhaps maimed, he drew his sword, and having fortunately a strong and spirited horse, was enabled to open a passage, sword in hand, through a host of assailants, and to dash across a rapid stream in front of him.

It was (he relates) a proverbial observation in accompanying these armies that three things were to be carefully avoided: the first, not to get among the choice and led horses, much given to kicking; the second, not to intrude on the Mughal's hunting ground; and the third, to make no near approach to the ladies of the imperial harim.

Bernier describes the Mughal's methods of hunting, especially those in which was used the *chita* ("hunting leopard") and the *caracal* lynx. The last-named would



THE QUEENS AND LADIES OF THE HARAM OF THE EMERALG AT KANGZEP TRAVELLING TO KASHMIR



overtake the game with swift springs, and leaping on to the back of the flying antelope, deer, or hare, would scratch out its eyes with its sharp claws, thus blinding the animal and making it an easy prey to the hunters. The long-legged chitas endeavoured to overtake the black buck antelopes by approaching them by stealth, creeping as flat as possible over the ground, and then, when within easy distance, bounding on to a surprised antelope with tremendous leaps, springing on to its back, biting at the blood-vessels of the neck, and tearing out the heart and intestines. The handsome "blue" nilghai tragelaphs<sup>1</sup> were usually surrounded by nets drawn closely by degrees. When the space was reduced to a small compass the emperor entered with his nobility and huntsmen, and killed the poor creatures with arrows, swords, and guns. The most solemn function, however, was the lion hunting, already described, which was still possible in many parts of North-west India in the seventeenth century. It was a royal sport restricted entirely to the emperor and the great feudatory princes.

After leaving Lahor to march northwards to the foothills, Bernier found the heat insupportable, even at the beginning of March. Not a cloud was to be seen, not a breath of air to be felt; the horses were exhausted, and not a blade of green grass was visible. Bernier was a martyr to prickly heat. "I feel as if I should myself expire before night. All my hopes are in four or five limes still remaining for lemonade, and in a little dry curd which I am about to drink diluted with water and with sugar. . . . The ink dries at the end of my pen, and the pen itself drops from my hand."

<sup>1</sup> The nilghai, as already stated, is peculiar at the present day to India, though its genus once inhabited North Africa. It is a large ruminant, as big as an ox, but with quite short, triangular, recurved horns.

At length the Mughal's army reached Bhimbar, situated at the foot of a steep, black, and scorched mountain. Here they encamped in the dry bed of a considerable torrent, upon pebbles and burning sands—a very furnace; and if a heavy shower had not fallen opportunely that morning, and Bernier had not received from the mountains a supply of curdled milk, limes, and a fowl, he might have perished from heat and exhaustion. “Yesterday, at night, the emperor<sup>1</sup> left these suffocating quarters. He was accompanied by Raushenara-Begum and the other women of the seraglio.”

Bernier goes on to describe the departure and relays of the different ministers of state, courtiers, princes, and nobles. These journeys were made in relays to avoid the inconvenience and confusion attending the thronging of the mountain route to Kashmir by large numbers of people. A good deal of the transport work up the steep paths into the mountains was done by elephants. They were very surefooted, feeling their way when the road was difficult or dangerous, and assuring themselves of the firm hold of one foot before moving the other. The camels were all left behind, and only a few mules were taken. Much of the portage was done by men, the emperor alone employing six thousand porters for his baggage, and the whole expedition thirty thousand. It is interesting to know that they were paid for their services, and that they sometimes carried loads as heavy as 100 pounds in weight.

The Great Mughal, and Bernier in his train, must have passed from the plains of the Panjab (“Land of the Five Rivers”) to Kashmir, via Naushera and Panch. After the terrific ascent of Bhimbar or Bember Mountain, be-

<sup>1</sup> The word actually used by Bernier is *roi* = king, but as he is referring to the Emperor Aurangzeb, it is more convenient to employ the term emperor, as there were many other kings in India subject or tributary to the Great Mughal.

tween the Jehlam and the Chenab Rivers, Bernier was surprised to find himself in a day and a night transported on a sudden from the torrid to a temperate zone: for he had no sooner scaled "that frightful wall of the world, I mean the lofty, steep, black, and bare mountain of Bember", and begun the descent on the other side, than he breathed a pure, mild, and refreshing air. What surprised him still more was to find himself, as it were, transferred from the Indies to Europe, the mountains he was traversing being covered with European plants and shrubs. One might almost, he writes, imagine oneself in the mountains of Auvergne, in a forest of fir, oak, elm, and plane trees. Strong was the contrast between such a scene and the burning fields of Hindustan.

Bernier's attention was particularly arrested by a mountain, distant between one and two days from Bember, covered on both sides with plants. The side facing the south (Hindustan) was full of Indian and European plants, mingled together; but the side exposed to the north was crowded exclusively with the vegetable productions of Europe.

The observant French traveller could not help admiring in the course of the march the successive generation and decay of trees. He saw hundreds plunged and plunging into abysses down which man never ventured, piled dead one upon another, and mouldering with time; while others were growing out of the ground, and supplying the places of those that had fallen. The magnificent cascades between the rocks increased the beauty of the scene. One of these waterfalls was especially remarkable. A torrent of water, rolling impetuously through a long and gloomy channel, covered with trees, precipitated itself suddenly down a perpendicular rock of prodigious height, and the ear was stunned with the noise occasioned by the



falling of these mighty waters. The Emperor Jahangir had erected on an adjacent rock, which was smoothed for the purpose, a large building from which the Court might leisurely contemplate this stupendous work of Nature.

But a strange accident cast a gloom over these scenes, and damped for a short time the pleasure of the expedition. The emperor was ascending the Pir-Panjal mountain pass, 11,400 feet in altitude, from which a distant view of the kingdom of Kashmir is first obtained. He was being followed by a long line of elephants, upon which sat the ladies in their mikdambars and haudas. The foremost elephant of the procession, appalled, it was supposed, by the great length and steepness of the path before him, stepped back upon the elephant that was moving on his track, who again pushed against the third elephant, the third against the fourth, and so on, until fifteen of them, incapable of turning round or extricating themselves in a road so steep and narrow, fell down a precipice. Happily for the women, the place where they fell was of no great height. Only three or four were killed; but there were no means of saving any of the elephants. "Two days afterwards we passed that way, and I observed that some of the poor elephants still moved their trunks."

As soon as Bernier reached Kashmir it struck him that the beautiful valley of the Jehlam had been at one time a vast lake until the pent-up waters had pierced a way through the foothills of the Himalayas and out into the plains of India. This idea also agreed with the traditions of the country. The breach of the mountain which enabled this lake to stream away seemed to Bernier to have been assisted or caused by severe earthquakes, such as frequently occur even at the present day in Kashmir and on its borders, and such as devastated in recent times

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several British hill stations.<sup>1</sup> In the earthquake of May, 1885, near Baramula in Kashmir, much of the landscape was altered over an area of about 500 square miles, twenty thousand houses, thirty thousand cattle, and three thousand human beings were destroyed.

Kashmir proper, however (the present state of that name covers a far larger area on the map than the region alluded to by Bernier), as it appeared to Bernier, was a beautiful valley dotted with low hills about 90 miles long and 34 miles broad. The southern mountains surrounding it in the direction of the plains of India were of moderate height, covered with the freshest verdure and with beautiful forests. In these hills or mountains there was superb pasture all the year round for cattle, sheep, goats, and horses. Wild game was in great abundance and has only recently diminished under the attacks of British sportsmen. There were also musk-deer in the mountains. All over Kashmir the honey bee existed in numbers. On the other hand, the country was "without tigers, bears, or lions", and was even said to have no venomous serpents. [As regards bears, Bernier was wrong; for Kashmir has numbers of these animals still: the Himalayan black bear (*Ursus torquatus*) and the greyish-brown species (*Ursus arctos isabellinus*).]

But to the east and west of these green hills rose magnificent snow mountains (to altitudes, as we now know, of 15,000 to over 20,000 feet), their summits at all times covered with snow and soaring high above the clouds and mist. From the sides of these mountains gushed forth innumerable streams of water, which are conducted

<sup>1</sup> He also mentions an interesting tradition as existing amongst the Arabs of South-west Arabia, that the Straits of Bab-al-Mandib, between Arabia and East Africa, were once an isthmus of land that became cracked by an earthquake shock, thus allowing the waters of the Red Sea to enter the Indian Ocean.

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by means of earthen channels even to the tops of the hillocks in the valley near by, enabling the inhabitants to irrigate their fields of rice. These waters, after separating into a thousand rivulets and producing a thousand cascades through this charming country, at length collected and formed the beautiful River Jehlam, navigable for a considerable distance for vessels with a draught of 3 or 4 feet. The Jehlam wound gently through the kingdom of Kashmir and then bent its course towards Baramula, where it found an outlet between two steep rocks and, after a long course through the foothills and the plains of the Panjab, joined the Chenab River, thus to become a confluent of the Indus.

The numberless streams issuing from the mountains maintain the valley of Kashmir and its hills in the most delightful verdure. The whole kingdom wore the appearance of a fertile and highly cultivated garden. Villages and hamlets were frequently to be seen through the luxuriant foliage. The meadows and vineyards, fields of rice, wheat, hemp, saffron, and many sorts of vegetables, amongst which were intermingled the irrigating trenches, rivers, canals, and several small lakes, composed as a whole a most enchanting scene. The ground everywhere was enamelled with our European flowers and plants and scattered with orchards of apple, pear, plum, apricot, and walnut trees, all bearing fruit in great abundance. In the private gardens were melons, water melons, parsnips, beet, radishes, and most of the pot herbs of Europe, besides others of Asiatic origin.

The capital of Kashmir, then as now, was the city of Srinagar.<sup>1</sup> It was built on the banks of a fresh lake

<sup>1</sup> An abbreviation of Surjya-nagar=sun city. But this was the Hindu name for it. By the Muhammadans at that time it was known as Kashmir or Kashur.

which communicated with the River Jehlam, also flowing through a part of the town. Several canals crossed the town between the Jehlam and the Dal, making it extremely picturesque in appearance with their wooden bridges. They were bordered by tallish houses of two or three stories, built of wood and in some cases of stone. Most of the old buildings and the Hindu temples were of stone; but wood was preferred at that time on account of its cheapness and the facility with which it was brought from the mountains by means of water carriage. Many of the houses along the banks of the river had little gardens, and some of them were surrounded by narrow canals on which pleasure boats were kept. In fact, Srinagar bore then, in the seventeenth century, and bears now, a certain resemblance to Venice, and is one of the most picturesque places in the world; with its lake of many islands, its canals, its river, its two green lofty hills crowned with forts, mosques, or temples, its rows of poplars, its fountains, and its marble temples. "The most beautiful of all the gardens", writes Bernier, "is one belonging to the king, called Shalimar. The entrance from the lake is through a spacious canal, bordered with green turf, and running between two rows of poplars. Its length is about five hundred paces, and it leads to a large summer house placed in the middle of the garden. A second canal, still finer than the first, then conducts you to another summer house, at the end of the garden. This canal and its sloping sides are paved with large blocks of free-stone. In the middle is a long row of fountains, fifteen paces asunder; besides which there are here and there large circular basins, or reservoirs, out of which arise other fountains, formed into a variety of shapes and figures.

"The summer houses are placed in the midst of the

canal, and are consequently surrounded by water, and situated between the two rows of large poplars planted on either side. They are built in the form of a dome, and encircled by a gallery, into which four doors open; two looking up, or down, the canal, and two leading to bridges that connect the buildings with both banks. The houses consist of a large room in the centre, and of four smaller apartments, one at each corner. The whole of the interior is painted and gilt, and on the walls of all the chambers are inscribed certain sentences, written in large and beautiful Persian characters. The four doors are extremely valuable; being composed of large stones, and supported by two beautiful pillars. The doors and pillars were found in some of the idol temples demolished by Shah Jahan, and it is impossible to estimate their value. I cannot describe the nature of the stone, but it is far superior to porphyry, or any species of marble."

Bernier expresses himself as charmed with Kashmir. In his opinion, this kingdom surpassed in beauty all that his warm imagination had anticipated. It was then probably unequalled in loveliness, climate, and fertility by any country of the same area; he thought it should be, as in former ages, the seat of sovereign authority, extending its dominion over all the circumjacent mountains, even as far as Tatar; and over the whole of Hindustan, to the island of Ceylon. It is not indeed without reason that the Mughals called Kashmir the Terrestrial Paradise of the Indies, or that Akbar was so unremitting in his efforts to wrest the sceptre from the hand of its native princes. His son, Jahangir, became so enamoured of this little kingdom as to make it the place of his favourite abode, and he often declared that he would rather be deprived of every other province of his mighty empire than lose Kashmir.

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Bernier is tempted, like some later writers, to identify Kashmir with the Garden of Eden of Eastern legends rather than any district which might be found in Armenia or elsewhere. He points out that, without much stretch of geographical conditions, it may be said that the Ganges, the Indus, the Chenab, and the Jamna all issue from Kashmir or the adjacent regions, and are more likely than any others to have represented the rivers of Paradise alluded to in *Genesis* and in earlier Babylonian records. The early white races who discovered and invaded Kashmir passed on—some of them—into Persia with their Aryan civilization, and onwards into Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Egypt, carrying with them, no doubt, as they went, a gradually fading remembrance of the exquisite land in which they had once made their home, a country that has been strangely neglected by the British Government of India, which should have established there, and not at Simla, the white capital of the Indian Empire.

According to Bernier, the Kashmiris were celebrated for wit, and considered more intelligent and ingenious than the natives of India proper. In poetry and in science they were not inferior to the Persians. They were an active and an industrious people, but more extended acquaintance with them on the part of European travellers and officials has revealed other sides to their character less estimable. They are undoubtedly very artistic, and Bernier was much impressed with their skill in woodcarving, joinery, and with the turning lathe. They manufactured out of their native woods beautiful bedsteads, chests, boxes, litters, or palkis; they perfectly understood the art of varnishing, of inlaying wood with metal and ivory; but, he remarks, the staple industry of Kashmir was its weaving. During several thousand years a remarkable local variety

of domestic goat had been developed and bred in this country—the shawl goat, locally known as *tus*. The silky hair of these goats was woven into the long-since famous shawls of exquisite softness. When the British Government settled the rulership of Kashmir by a treaty in March, 1846, the Maharaja, or king, of that country bound himself to send to the British Government once a year one horse, twelve perfect shawl goats of the *tus* breed (six males and six females), and six Kashmir shawls. These shawls were sent on to the Queen of Great Britain (Empress of India after 1876), and used by her to be given away as wedding presents. For a time they were much in fashion; but then went out of fashion by a capricious want of taste on the part of the educated public. They are such beautiful fabrics that it is to be hoped they will “come in again”, though the exquisitely soft fleecy hair of this goat might, it is true, be woven into garments more suited in shape and intention to our present needs than the shawls of the Victorian age. It would also be interesting to learn what becomes of the twelve live goats of this breed sent annually to the Indian Government. Are they made use of in India, or would they be available for starting this valuable breed of goat in other parts of the British dominions, in Cape Colony, for example, in parts of East and Central Africa, in Tasmania, New Zealand, or the south-east of Australia?

Bernier had many arguments on philosophy and religion with his patron, the Nawab Danishmand-khan. The latter, though a very broad-minded man, was always urging his doctor to become a Muhammadan, and seeking to impress him with the miracles which could be wrought in support of such a religion. Like most Easterns, he was usually imposed on in such matters and very credulous.

He sent Bernier off to Baramula, about 32 miles northwest of Srinagar, to the tomb of a celebrated saint or dervish who, though dead, yet by his influence cured the sick and infirm. At this tomb it was reported that a marvel was constantly wrought by the power of the saint, which no person could see without acknowledging as a miracle. There was a large round stone which the strongest man could scarcely raise from the ground; but which eleven men, after a prayer to the saint, lifted up with the tips of their fingers with the same ease as they would move a piece of straw. Bernier went to the mosque and the saint's tomb. Adjoining the mosque was a kitchen, where he observed large boilers filled with meat and rice. This he at once conceived to be the magnet that drew the sick and the miracle that healed them. On the other side of the mosque was the lodging and the garden of the mullahs, or priests, who were supported by this charity, and who were supposed to perform the miracle of raising the stone under the influence of the saint. There were eleven of them, and they formed themselves into a circle round the stone; but what with their long wadded coats, and the compactness of the circle, Bernier had great difficulty in seeing how they performed the miracle. But at last he detected the mullahs making use of their thumbs as well as their forefingers, and using very considerable effort to raise the stone. Nevertheless, in order to satisfy himself there was no miracle, he uttered repeated cries of admiration and distributed rupis. Impressed by his fervour, one of the mullahs gave up his place to Bernier, "no doubt hoping that the remaining ten would be able by an extraordinary effort to lift the stone", for Bernier contributed no more help than just the tip of his finger. But they were much mortified to find that the stone, which he



persisted in not trying to raise more than by applying the tip of his finger, was constantly inclining and falling in his direction. At last they became so angry that he thought it was prudent to hold the stone with both finger and thumb and raise it to the usual height. After this had been achieved they still looked on him with such an evil eye, and seemed so inclined to denounce and stone him as an infidel, that he thought it wise to affect absolute conviction as to the miracle, and threw down more money to cover his retreat, mounting his horse at once and riding away rapidly.

After visiting a remarkable lake, in the centre of which was a hermitage and a little garden with a wonderful spring close by the lake which rose and fell at intervals, throwing up a large quantity of fine sand that returned again the way it came, Bernier then went on up to the lofty mountains amongst the glaciers and reached to the Gungabal Lake, on which there was ice even in summer—ice that was blown up by the fierce winds into regular icebergs. He continued his journey to the White Stone Mountain—Sang-i-safeid—in the bosom of which nestled a charming oasis, warmed by the sun's rays in summer and then becoming a lovely garden filled with flowers. Yet here, as elsewhere in these Kashmiri mountains, it was declared by the hermits who took up their residence, or by the natives who came to pasture their flocks, that it was most dangerous to make much noise or to agitate the air with loud cries, as in such case torrents of rain immediately descended. Hermits and saints, indeed, took up their abodes in some of the mountain passes of Kashmir for the purpose of warning troops of merchants, or the leaders of armies, of the consequences which would befall them if they allowed their men to shoot as they reached the

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summits. It is related by Bernier that where this warning was neglected, on one or two occasions, armies have run the risk of perishing in consequence of the violent storms of rain that fell shortly after they had raised the clamour.

In 1665 Bernier had returned to Lahor in the train of the Emperor Aurangzeb. From Lahor he proceeded to Agra, where he joined company with a fellow countryman, Tavernier, in whose society he travelled to Bengal. From Bengal he went on alone to Eastern India and the Dekkan (Golkonda), thence he crossed the peninsula to Surat, and, in 1667, took ship for the Persian Gulf. He then travelled overland through Persia to Syria, and reached Marseilles and Paris in 1669. In 1670 he published his book on the *History of the States of the Great Mogol*. In 1685 he paid a visit to England (he had long had friendly relations with English men of science), and in 1688 he died in Paris.

JEAN BAPTISTE TAVERNIER (afterwards Baron of Aubonne) was born at Paris in 1605, and was of French-Belgian descent. As a boy he seems to have had a passion for travel, and by the age of twenty-two he had managed to visit most parts of France and to see something of England, Holland, Germany, Switzerland, Hungary, and Italy, commencing these travels when he was only fifteen years old. At a later date he visited Poland. He then went on to Turkey and Persia. In September, 1638, he once more started for the East in a ship sailing from Marseilles to Alexandretta (Skanderün) in the Levant, and taking with him his brother Daniel and a young draughtsman or painter, as well as a surgeon. He was supplied with plenty of merchandise, so that he might travel as a trader. From Skanderün he made his way overland to Persia, visiting the Sufi Shah in the middle of 1639. By the following year he had reached India,

no doubt by way of the Persian Gulf, and after travelling through Bengal and Northern India he visited Goa and the diamond mines of Golkonda, after which he returned to the Persian Gulf and Europe. In 1643 he once again left Marseilles for Skanderūn, and again reached and crossed Persia without trouble or incident, and embarked, probably at Bandar Abbas, for Surat on the west coast of India, where he arrived in 1645. Subsequently he travelled over a good deal of South, Central, and Eastern India, being well treated at Goa, not only by the governor, but by the archbishop and Inquisitor-General, in spite of his being a Huguenot or French Protestant.

In 1648 he sailed from South-east India in a Dutch ship for Java, in order to meet his brother, who had gone to reside at the Court of the King of Bantam, the headquarters of the English in those days in the Island of Java. Tavernier gives the following description of an interview with the King of Bantam:—

“I found the king with three of his captains and my brother seated in Oriental fashion, and they had before them five large plates of rice of different colours. For their drink they had Spanish wine and brandy, with many kinds of sherbets. After I had saluted the king, and had presented him with a diamond ring, and another of blue sapphires, and a small bracelet of diamonds, rubies, and blue sapphires, he invited me to be seated, and told the attendants to give me a cup of brandy to excite my appetite. This cup held about half a septier of Paris, but I refused the officer who presented it to me; this astonished the king. My brother then asked him to excuse me, saying that I never drank brandy; but that as for Spanish wine I could drink a little of it, upon which the king ordered me to be given some.”

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After the repast the king seated himself in a kind of armchair, the woodwork of which was gilt and moulded like the frames of our pictures. "His feet and legs were uncovered, and underneath him there was a small Persian carpet of gold and silk. His garment was a piece of calico, a part of which covered the body from the waist to the knees, the remainder being on his back and about his neck like a scarf. He wore as a headband a kind of handkerchief, having three ends; and his hair, which was very long, was twisted and bound together on the top of his head. In place of slippers he had placed by the side of his chair sandals with leather straps to go over the feet, like those attached to a spur, which were embroidered with gold and small pearls. Two of his officers stood behind him with large fans, the handles of which were 5 or 6 feet long, and at the ends there were bundles of peacocks' plumes. On the king's right side there was an old black woman, who held in her hands a small mortar and a pestle of gold, in which she crushed the betel leaves, with which she mixed areca nuts and dissolved seed pearls. When she saw that the whole was well pounded she placed her hand on the king's back, who at once opened his mouth, and she put the betel in with her fingers as women do who give pap to their infants, because the king had no teeth; for he had eaten so much of these betel leaves, and smoked so much tobacco, that his teeth had fallen out."

Tavernier found the East India Company strongly established at Bantam<sup>1</sup>, and its officials received him very well; but as regards the Dutch Company, he got into a

<sup>1</sup> The English had established this post in Java in 1603, and although several times attacked and driven away by the Dutch, they maintained themselves at Bantam (whence we get our Bantam breed of fowls) until 1682, when the Dutch finally compelled them to withdraw.

difficulty with them over a matter of finance, in which he seems to have been partly in the wrong. Eventually he returned from Java to Holland in a Dutch ship round the Cape of Good Hope. After his return to Europe he realized much money by the sale of the diamonds and other precious stones he had brought home with him from India. But in the summer of 1651 he started a fourth time for India by the usual overland route across Northern Syria and Persia to the Persian Gulf. On this voyage he made his way direct to the eastern coast of India, and after friendly dalliance with the English at Fort St. George, he again travelled backwards and forwards across Golkonda, trying to sell jewels to native princes, and then made a long stay in Persia, returning to Paris in the autumn of 1655. Two years afterwards he made his fifth journey to the East. This time with some interruptions and accidents he made his way by ship from Marseilles to Smyrna, and thence across Asia Minor to Persia. After a brief visit to India, once again going to the diamond mines at Golkonda, he returned to Persia and home to Paris in 1662.

He then married the daughter of a French jeweller, but nevertheless in the following year he left Paris on his sixth Oriental journey, which lasted for five years, taking with him a young nephew (amongst other attendants), who was eventually to prove basely ungrateful and rob him of much of his wealth. Apparently he brought back with him on each occasion to India diamonds and other jewels which he had purchased in Asia in the rough, and which he had sent to Holland to be cut into brilliant stones. On his sixth journey he received the greatest honours and attentions from the Shah of Persia, and in consequence from that time onwards for another hundred



JEAN BAPTISTE TAVERNIER, 1605-1689



years many French merchants, jewellers, and surgeons visited Persia. In the year 1665 he was again harshly treated by the Dutch, who robbed him of important dispatches which he was carrying out of friendliness to the English at Surat, in order to give them information regarding the outbreak of war between Britain and Holland in Europe. This made him finally a great enemy of the Dutch people, whom he forthwith attacked in his writings. On this sixth voyage he paid a visit to the Great Mughal, Aurangzeb, and travelled through North Central India (meeting Bernier at Agra) to Bengal.

Eventually he returned to France through Persia from Turkey in 1668, and then, being sixty-three years of age, resolved to settle down with his wife and enjoy the wealth he had acquired. He had an interview with the French King Louis XIV, who at that time was much interested in promoting a French chartered company to trade with India and Persia. On account of the services which Tavernier had rendered to French merchants in Persia, the king granted him a title of nobility, to back up which he purchased the Barony of Aubonne, near Geneva, and probably on Swiss territory. This last point seems to have been of some importance to him, because the canton of Geneva was Protestant, and the persecution of the Huguenots was again beginning in France. He led, however, a most peaceful life at Aubonne from 1670 to 1684, during which time he published three volumes on the East which attracted very great attention. In 1684 he was invited to visit the Elector of Brandenburg at Berlin; for this future King of Prussia was desirous of starting a North German company to trade with the East, and wished to send Tavernier as his ambassador to the Great Mughal. The scheme eventually came to nothing; but in the mean-



time Tavernier had sold his estate at Aubonne, and at seventy-nine years of age was preparing once more to proceed to India. After returning to Paris to settle up his affairs, he decided, though eighty years of age, to attempt to reach India by way of Russia, partly in order to recover the property of which he had been defrauded by his nephew. Apparently he got no farther than Moscow, and died and was buried there about 1689.

As the result of his explorations of India, Tavernier introduced to the notice of European manufacturers the jute fibre, now such an important export from India. It made in those days coarse "gunny" bags for wrapping up merchandise. [Jute fibre is produced by a bush known scientifically as *Corchorus capsularis*. This is a near relation of the *Corchorus*, with beautiful yellow rose-like flowers, which is such a prominent feature in English gardens in the springtime.] He also gave a very interesting description of the cultivation and preparation of the indigo dye in the seventeenth century:—

"Indigo is made from a plant<sup>1</sup> which is sown every year after the rains, and which, before preparation, much resembles hemp. It is cut three times in the year to within 6 inches of the ground, and the first cutting takes place when it is about 2 or 3 feet high. The first cutting is superior to the produce of the plant when it grows up again, and the second growth is less inferior again to the third or last cutting. The first growth produces an indigo which is a beautiful violet blue, a brighter colour than that obtained from the other growths in the same year. After cutting the plant the natives throw the leaves into vats, the surface of which is an extremely hard, marble-like cement (chunam). These large shallow

<sup>1</sup> *Indigofera sumatrana*, a herb of the bean family.—H. H. J.

tanks are half-full of water, and at length are almost filled up with the leaves of the indigo harvest. The natives then stir the leaves and the water backwards and forwards, until at last, instead of water and leaves, there is nothing but a pulp or mud. This is then allowed to rest, and after a time the water rises clear above the deposit of the leaf pulp. Holes are then opened in the tank, which allow the water above to escape, and the pulp or slime below, which has become a brilliant blue colour, is shovelled into baskets. This is then moulded by the hand into egg-shaped lumps or small cakes. When these masses of indigo are dry they are apt to give off a quantity of dust, which is sold separately as a dye. Those who have to deal with the indigo under these conditions hold a cloth in front of the face with only two holes for the eyes, and whilst they are doing this drink milk every hour 'as a preservative against the subtlety of the indigo'. All these precautions do not prevent them from having their system more or less penetrated by this fine dust, so that their very perspiration and the saliva in their mouths for days afterwards is coloured blue."

Tavernier's four books on the Near East and on India, first published in different editions between 1675 and 1681, made a great sensation in the reading world of Central and Western Europe, and were soon translated into English, German, Dutch, and Italian. Together with Bernier's book they very greatly increased European knowledge of India, and led to a considerable growth of French political interest in Persia, India, and Further India, which was to bear fruit in the next century.

## CHAPTER X

### The British Conquest of India

Driven out of Malaysia for a time by the Dutch, and thereby cut off from access to pepper and spice-producing countries, the English East India Company made a determined attempt to establish factories on the south coast of India. They not only succeeded in doing so; but also revenged themselves on the Portuguese by urging the Mughal emperor to expel them from Bengal, at the very time in which he was granting to the English Company a limited permission to trade in that region. In 1640, after a temporary period of disgrace, due to the piratical acts of another English chartered company,<sup>1</sup> the original East India Company was allowed to open a factory at Hugli, on the river of that name in Bengal, not far from the site of Calcutta. In the previous year, by agreement with a Hindu raja, Fort St. George had been built on the site of Madras.

In 1665 the Island of Bombay was transferred by the King of Portugal to the British Crown as part of the dowry of his sister, Catherine of Braganza, who had married Charles II of England in 1661. King Charles II, who did so much to found the British Empire of to-day, transferred this island to the East India Company three years afterwards, for a nominal yearly rental of £10. In less

<sup>1</sup> That founded by Courten, which had attempted to establish trading stations on the coast of Madagaskar, and had even come to terms with the Portuguese and established an agency at Goa.

than twenty years afterwards it had become the headquarters of the Western Presidency of the English Company in India; by which time the trading establishments and dominions of this chartered company had been divided practically into five presidencies. (1) The Presidency of Bantam in Java, with dependent stations in Celebes, Java, and Borneo; (2) The Presidency of Fort St. George (Madras) and the Koromandel Coast; (3) The Presidency of Western India; (4) The Presidency of Bengal; and (5) that of Gombrūn or Bandar Abbas and the Persian Gulf, which included the station of Basrah in the delta of the Euphrates.

In 1689 the Governor and Company of Merchants of London Trading to the East Indies,<sup>1</sup> the senior chartered company, determined to become a governing power in India by maintaining an armed force for the defence of its factories against native aggression, or against "interlopers", for there were already serious rivals in the field in addition to the prosperous Dutch and the decaying Portuguese. A succession of French East India companies had been founded from 1604 onwards, but had done nothing very marked in regard to India or the acquisition of territorial possessions elsewhere until the middle of the seventeenth century. A Dieppe sea captain, Gaubert, had taken possession of the Mascarene island of Réunion in 1638; and when a new East India Company was formed in 1642, under the patronage of Cardinal Richelieu, the

<sup>1</sup> In 1650 the original Chartered Company had absorbed Courten's rival trading association, the Assada Merchants; and in 1657 they also amalgamated with another rival, the Company of Merchant Adventurers, chartered by Cromwell; and in 1708 united with yet a third, which had been founded in 1698 under the title of a General Society of Indian Merchants trading to the East Indies. By the beginning of the eighteenth century the Honourable East India Company (as it had been called for short since the writings of Sir Thomas Roe in 1615) secured the exclusive privilege by charter of trading to all places between the Cape of Good Hope and (across the Indian and Pacific Oceans) the Straits of Magellan.

great minister of Louis XIII, this island (named Bourbon, in 1649) was formally taken possession of and colonized (1643-9). After 1665 Bourbon became for a time the chief headquarters of the French in the Indian Ocean, their attempts to colonize the south-east coast of Madagascar, and even to acquire sovereignty of that island for France, having resulted in failure. In 1674, Pondicherry, on the south-east coast of India, was acquired as a French trading station by the new French East India Company, which had been chartered in 1664, and in 1688 the same company obtained from the Viceroy of Bengal the station of Chandarnagar on the Hugli River, which remains a piece of French territory to the present day. After that the French East India Company got into difficulties, and its work of securing fresh footholds in India was only revived after 1719, when it had united, under the name of "Perpetual Company of the Indies", the other French chartered companies of China, Senegal (West Africa), and the West Indies. The Mascarene island of Mauritius, abandoned by the Dutch in 1710, was annexed by the French East India Company in 1715, and renamed "Ile de France".

The rivalry between French and English in India did not become immediately acute, in the first place, because there was the third element of the Dutch, who, by the close of the seventeenth century, had become strongly established in Ceylon, as well as in Malaysia; and there were also the Danes, who had acquired settlements on the east coast of India as early as 1616, and had founded others on the Malabar coast by the close of the seventeenth century.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Nearly all these stations remained Danish, together with the Nicobar Islands, until they were purchased from Denmark by Great Britain in 1845 and 1869. The Danish

Then, in 1717, there came the first direct expression of German interest in the Indian trade. That remarkable general, Prince Eugene of Savoy, the colleague of Marlborough in the wars between Great Britain, Germany, and the Dutch against the power of France, determined to open up a commerce between the Austrian Netherlands (Belgium) and India. The vessels which he sent out in 1717 made such a profitable voyage that, as the result, the Emperor Karl VI of Germany founded by charter the Imperial Ostend East India Company, in 1722, which soon afterwards became a most profitable undertaking, and established stations in Bengal and on the Madras coast. The objects which Prince Eugene had in view in promoting such a company read curiously modern in their tone. Such an India company, he believed, might gradually form the nucleus of a German fleet, which would create one first-class naval station at Ostend, on the North Sea, and another at Fiume or Trieste, on the Mediterranean, with, perhaps, other ports on the Baltic. Thus Germany as a trading and a maritime nation would be rendered independent of Holland, Britain, and France.

These projects were fully understood, however, especially in London and at Amsterdam. The emperor was obliged to withdraw his charter, in 1727, to avoid quarrelling with his allies. Out in India the English, Dutch, and French rather basely stirred up the local governments to attack the principal German station on the Hugli River. Thus by 1733 the Germans and Flemings, who had started

intervention in the affairs of India produced one remarkable effect—the introduction of Protestant Christian missionaries in the latter part of the eighteenth century, missionaries who used the English language as their vehicle of instruction. This action on the part of the King of Denmark led to the East India Company being obliged to recognize the lawfulness not only of teaching Christianity, but of spreading a European education amongst the natives; and this in its turn has gradually changed the whole political future of India.

this enterprise under Austrian protection, were driven from India.

In 1753, however, the new rising power of North Germany—Prussia—founded a Bengal trading company with its headquarters at Emden, in East Friesland. This Emden East India Company was also very hardly treated by the Dutch, French, and English in Bengal. The pilots of these companies refused to show the German ships the safe course through the shallows of the Hugli River; and in so doing they were backed up by the Viceroy of Bengal, who, for some reason, was very much opposed to the coming of the Germans. So after a few years the Bengal Company of Emden faded away, and German trade with India was not reopened till after 1813, at which date the English Chartered Company was obliged to drop its exclusive trading monopoly in India.<sup>1</sup> From the middle of the nineteenth century, however, German trade with British India began to expand, until now it plays a very considerable part in the commerce of both empires.

The English Company had the more need to maintain native troops (officered by Englishmen) to defend itself in this, that, and the other place, inasmuch as at the close of the seventeenth century it could no longer rely on the power of the Mughal Emperors, or of their Muhammadan feudatories in Eastern and Southern India, to maintain law and order.

The Mughal Emperor Akbar had practically imposed peace on all India and the adjoining regions, from Turkestan on the north to Cape Comorin on the south; but after his death, in 1605, the Hindu power in Central and

<sup>1</sup> All exclusive trading rights of the Honourable East India Company, even in connection with China, ceased absolutely after 1833.

Southern India began to revive, while the Persians under the warlike and vigorous Sufi dynasty attacked the Mughal possessions in Afghanistan, and eventually severed that region from the Mughal Empire. But the most serious change in affairs was the revival of the Hindus (namely, peoples who had resisted conversion to the Muhammadan religion), under the leadership of the Marathas. The Marathas were a confederation of Hindu tribes in South-west India, that is to say, in the eastern part of what now constitutes the Bombay Presidency. The name of this confederacy was derived from a tract of land in Central India known as the Maharashtra. It was a region where the Hindu peoples were most warlike and powerful, and consequently little impression had been made on them by the Muhammadan invaders of India, who had preferred to pass round them to the east into the Dekkan, or to conquer the more easily subdued countries of Bengal, Gujarat, and the north-west. By 1650 most of the Hindu states of Northern India had been brought into something like subjection to the Mughal Empire. The powerful Hindu Empire of Vijayanagar (see pp. 70-1) had been smashed in the battle of Talikot, won against it by the confederated Muhammadan kingdoms of the Dekkan in 1565; though there still remained standing small independent Hindu states in the southernmost part of India.<sup>1</sup> But after 1650, for some time to come, Southern India was dominated by three Muhammadan states originally founded by Afghan or Turkish adventurers — Golkonda, Ahmadnagar, and Bijapur. These were not

<sup>1</sup> Amongst these was Maisur (Mysore), which remained under Hindu rulers till the middle of the eighteenth century (1763), when it was seized by Haidar Ali, a most remarkable military adventurer, descended remotely from a wandering Panjabi (perhaps Afghan) Muhammadan saint, or holy beggar, who had found his way into Southern India in the sixteenth century.



at all disposed to come under the control of the Mughal Empire; on the contrary, these rival Muhammadan states sought in turn to enlist on their side the great Hindu confederacy of West Central India—the Marathas.

These Marathas were being prepared for resistance against Muhammadan domination by a Rajput warrior from Northern India, who bore the title of Bhonsla. He fought as a mercenary on the side of the two Muhammadan states of the Dekkan against the Mughals; and when he died in about 1650 he left his son, the famous Sivaji, in possession of a small estate and at the head of a band of well-trained Hindu soldiers—spearmen mounted on small sturdy horses. When not engaged in fighting, these people tilled the soil industrially. By the year 1680, when he died, Sivaji had assumed the title of Raja, and all royal prerogatives with it, and had built up a powerful Hindu kingdom in South-west India. His son, Sambhaji, only reigned nine years, during which he drove the Portuguese out of some of their forts on the Bombay coast; but in his wars with the Mughals he had the misfortune to be taken prisoner. He was brought before the Emperor Aurangzeb, the most powerful of all the Mughal emperors, and who reigned over two-thirds of India by the time of his death in 1707. Aurangzeb caused the eyes of Sambhaji to be burnt out with a red-hot iron, then had his tongue pulled out and cut off, because he was a Hindu and had blasphemed the Prophet Muhammad; and finally had his head struck off by the executioner. Sambhaji's son Sahu, a child, was kept prisoner by Aurangzeb, but was set free when he had grown to manhood, at the death of Aurangzeb in 1707. The Mughals in the interval had not been able to subdue the Maratha confederacy, though they had in a mea-

sure conquered the independent Muhamadan kingdoms of Southern India. But Sahu was an effeminate young man who shrank from the responsibility and dangers of leadership. He therefore transferred the rule of his territories to a Brahman adviser, on whom he conferred a hereditary prime ministership with the title of Peshwa. He only retained for his own family two little principalities in Western India, one of which—Kolhapur—is still governed by a Maratha prince, but not really of the blood of Sivaji.

The Peshwas, who were of the priestly or Brahman caste, infused a new national vigour into the widespread Hindu confederacy, which very nearly ended in their becoming the masters of India; but for the battle of Panipat in 1761, at which the Afghan king, Ahmad Shah, came to the rescue of the Mughals and inflicted a decisive defeat on the Marathas, checking for ever any possibility of their conquering Northern India. This defeat, moreover, definitely broke up the Maratha confederacy at its greatest into a number of Hindu states. These frequently acted independently, and even fought one against another to further selfish ambitions. Thus there grew up the Hindu Bhonsla rajas of Berar in Central India, who nearly succeeded in conquering Bengal; and the Hindu states of Indor and Gwalior under originally low-caste, successful Hindu generals, one of whom—Holkar—was descended from a shepherd, and the other—Sindhia—from a slipper bearer. The descendants of both of these soldier adventurers are now, and have been for a century and a half, amongst the greatest princes of India. Another of the Maratha states was Baroda, under the Gaekwar. The southern part of the Maratha dominions, comprising much of the Bombay Presidency,

continued after 1761 to be governed by the Peshwas and their descendants until 1818, when, after repeated wars with the British, the whole of the Peshwa's dominions were annexed to the Bombay Presidency, while the last of the Peshwas retired to live near Kānpur (Cawnpore) on a pension of £80,000 a year.<sup>1</sup>

It has been truly said that the British, when forced by a series of unforeseen events into a position of pre-dominance, really had to conquer India in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries not from the Muhammadans but from the Hindus. But, of course, their conquest was made possible by the continual warfare and lack of cohesion, not only amongst the Hindu confederacies, but between the great Muhammadan forces. In spite of the terrible defeat of Panipat, the two northern Maratha states, Indor and Gwalior, united to invade much of Northern India, and to them in 1771 the Mughal emperor, Shah Alam, surrendered himself lest he should be taken prisoner by the British. He was restored to the Mughal throne at Delhi, and maintained there as a puppet emperor under the control of Indor and Gwalior until these states were defeated by the British in 1804, and the last emperors of the Mughal dynasty then became mere tutelar sovereigns pensioned and guarded by the British Chartered Company.

After the death of Aurangzeb in 1707, for thirteen years the Mughal Empire had been weakened by disputes and civil wars as to the succession and by the installation

<sup>1</sup> This man had no legitimate descendant, but adopted a young Hindu as his son under the name of Nana Sahib. After the Peshwa's death in 1852 the Indian Government refused to continue his pension to his adopted son. Consequently the latter conceived the most violent hatred against the British régime, and when he saw his opportunity, during the Indian Mutiny, revenged himself on us by the terrible massacre of Kānpur (1857).

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of boy emperors supported by Persian ministers or Arab adventurers. The governor of the great province of Audh, in Northern India—a Persian merchant who had risen to be the Wazir or principal minister of the empire—declared himself independent of the Mughal emperor and erected Audh into a kingdom, which lasted as such until it was annexed by the British in 1852. About the same time another minister of the Mughal Empire, Nizam-al-Mulk (a Turkoman by race), who had been appointed Governor of the Dekkan, also established his independence, and was the forerunner of the Nizams of Hyderabad, the largest self-governing native state in India at the present day. Simultaneously the Afghans and the Persians were beginning once again to threaten India. Northern Audh was invaded by the Rohilla tribe of Afghans, who repeatedly defeated the Mughal troops and those of Audh. They were only prevented from conquering much of Northern India by the intervention of the Marathas.

In 1727 the military power of Persia (which had previously been brought to utter ruin by the Afghans, 1721-9) received a great impetus and development through the uprising of Nadir Shah (Nadir Kuli), originally a Turkish robber, chief of the Kizilbash tribe, on the north-east frontier of Persia, who succeeded in 1732 in establishing himself as ruler of Persia in place of the dynasty of the Sufis. In 1739, having first of all secured control over the province of Kabul, which had formerly belonged to the Mughals, he descended on Delhi with an immense host of Afghans, Turkomans, and Persians, captured it, massacred several thousand of its inhabitants, allowed his troops to plunder it for fifty-eight days, and then returned to Persia with plunder, which in money and precious stones must have reached a value of about

£30,000,000. Then there rose up the founder of the Afghan nation, Ahmad Shah, the Durani, who severed what we now know as Afghanistan from the rule of Persia, and then proceeded to invade Northern India, which he did six times between 1747 and 1761. The miseries that were then inflicted, especially on the districts still populated by Hindus, were such as exceeded even the horrors of the early Tatar invasions. Unarmed Hindu pilgrims worshipping at the different shrines and temples were slaughtered, the temples were defiled with the blood and entrails of the sacred cattle, the young women and boys were carried off into captivity, districts which had once been densely inhabited were swept absolutely bare, towns were burnt and razed to the ground, food crops and palm forests were destroyed, and a good deal of the Panjab region of the Five Rivers was annexed to the newly founded state—one might almost say empire—of Afghanistan.

Before the British could intervene effectually in the affairs of the dissolving Mughal Empire, they had to fight for predominance in India with the French. French ambitions in regard to the Indian Empire rose and fell within a period of twenty-six years, between 1735 and 1761. In 1735 a remarkable man, BENOIT DUMAS, who had done much to develop the Island of Mauritius, was transferred to Pondicherry as Governor of all the French settlements in India. To interfere in native disputes he made use of the growing force of soldiery which was being drilled and maintained by the French, as by the British (for the defence of their stations and of the Company's money). He thus, by promoting the victory of his native friends, secured here and there pieces of terri-

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tory for France, and by siding with the Muhammadan notabilities, more or less representing the Mughal Emperor in the south-eastern part of India, he obtained from that emperor a high civil and military rank as a prince of the Indian Empire, which prerogatives he was allowed to hand on to his successors, the governors of Pondicherri.

He was succeeded by a personage equally remarkable, JOSEPH FRANÇOIS DUPLEIX, who had done much to improve the position of the French at Chandarnagar, in Bengal, and who, when a war broke out in Europe between France and England, contrived by the help of the native princes to capture Madras. This was, however, restored to the English when peace was made, owing to their victories in other parts of the world. In 1751 war broke out again in Southern India between the English and the French, both parties posing as the allies of rival native princes, and fighting their battles, for the main part, though not entirely, with native soldiers. Under Dupleix was the Marquis de Bussy, who, by dint of helping Nizam al Mulk to establish himself as an independent monarch in the Dekkan, obtained for the French an extensive grant of coast land between Madras and Orissa, in Eastern India. The French, in fact, were carrying all before them, when, in 1756, Dupleix was recalled to France in disgrace through some obscure Court intrigue.

An English regiment had been already sent to India in 1754. In 1759 the French were attacked resolutely by the British in Eastern India, and by the close of 1761 not a single foothold in India remained to the French, though in course of time their original stations of Pondicherri, Karikal, Mahé, and Chandarnagar were restored to them, really only after the Napoleonic wars were over in 1815. Portugal had already almost faded out of sight as an

Indian power, not so much through the attacks of the British as, firstly, through the Dutch, and, secondly, the Marathas. Any idea of a French India was disposed of by the British victories of Colonel FRANCIS FORDE at Kondor (near Vizagapatam) and Masulipatam in January, 1760; by SIR EYRE COOTE at Wandewash and Ginji in 1760 and 1761. There remained only the Dutch amongst European powers to contest the British advance in Bengal. The Dutch, having first of all attacked the British, were disposed of by Colonel LORD CLIVE, who in 1759 destroyed their ships and defeated their army on the Hugli River.

Before the French had been decisively overcome in Southern India, the British trade and influence in Bengal had been steadily increasing. The Company's Bengal capital of Calcutta had been founded by JOB CHARNOCK in 1696. But in 1756, the Company's officials found themselves suddenly at war with the Muhammadan ruler of the country, Siraj-ad-Daula. This young man, soon after succeeding to the position of Nawab of Bengal, attacked Calcutta suddenly, on the plea of wishing to arrest a member of his own family who had taken refuge there. A portion of the English garrison fled down the Hugli River in ships and boats. The remainder surrendered, and were thoughtlessly crammed into the small military prison at Fort William, to pass the night there until Suraj-ad-Daula could decide what to do with them. This was the celebrated "Black Hole", a room about 18 feet square, with two small windows. On that night of June, 1756, it held one hundred and forty-six English men and women, of whom all but twenty-three died of suffocation.

Already a young clerk in the service of the Honourable



CIVIL AT THE SIEGE OF ARCOT (1751)





East India Company—ROBERT CLIVE—once a boy at the Merchant Taylors School,<sup>1</sup> had turned soldier in the Indian wars between the English and the French, and in the most remarkable manner had, with a small force, captured a strong place called Arcot, the capital of the district of the Karnatik. He not only captured the place; but subsequently defended it most brilliantly against the French and their Indian allies. The extreme bravery of Clive and his officers, and the devotion it inspired amongst the native soldiers, attracted the attention of a band of roving Marathas. The movement of the Marathas, come to Clive's assistance, inspired still more vigorous attacks on the part of the Muhammadans and the French. But Clive repulsed his besiegers with a valour and an address on the part of himself and a few soldiers under his command, which at this distance of time seems wellnigh miraculous. This event took place in 1751, and made such a tremendous impression in England that it really led the British Government to determine on founding a British Empire in India. Clive married, returned to England, and came back three years afterwards as a lieutenant-colonel and a governor. When the news of the capture of Calcutta reached Madras, Clive was dispatched to restore the situation in Bengal. He recaptured Calcutta very quickly. With six hundred British soldiers and five hundred British seamen, eight hundred Sepoys or Indian soldiers, and seven pieces of artillery he had routed the army of Siraj-ad-Daula, which consisted of thirty-four thousand men, forty pieces of artillery, and fifty trained elephants. His victory led to a treaty with the Nawab, which was little

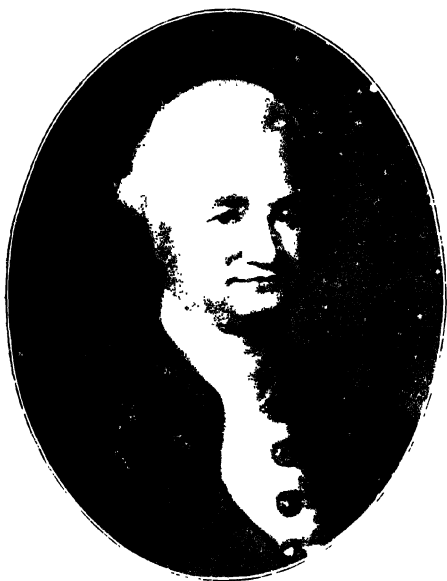
<sup>1</sup> Clive was born at Styche, near Market Drayton, Shropshire, on September 29, 1725. He died by his own hands in 1774, when only fifty years old, worn out and sickened by the venomous persecution to which he was subjected in England by his mean and miserable detractors.

## Pioneers in India

more than a truce. Six months afterwards Clive marched inland to the vicinity of the Nawab's capital of Murshidabad, a town so vast that it seemed to be as large as the London of the middle eighteenth century. With three thousand two hundred soldiers (of whom one thousand one hundred were British) he faced, at Plassey, on the 23rd of June, 1757, an army of the Nawab, which consisted of fifty thousand infantry, eighteen thousand cavalry, and fifty-three pieces of artillery served by French soldiers in the Nawab's pay. After a brief indecision Clive attacked, with the results that are so well known. He conquered at the battle of Plassey mainly with his artillery, with scarcely the loss of one white soldier. Only twenty-two Sepoys were killed. This victory of Plassey, followed by the battle of Baksar, on the borders of Audh, won by SIR HECTOR MUNRO in 1764, practically gave the supreme government of India to the British nation.

It has been truly said that Lord Clive, who quitted India finally in 1767, laid the foundations of the British Empire in Bengal; but WARREN HASTINGS,<sup>1</sup> who succeeded him, really planned the British Empire of India, which was to succeed that of the Mughals. And although he made Bengal the focus of this empire, he created a plan of administration which was to be adopted in course of time throughout this vast area of Southern Asia, and the universality of his scheme was recognized by his being made, in 1774, not merely Governor of Bengal, but first Governor-General of India, his position being recognized by a statute of the British Parliament passed in 1773. One of his first notable acts outside the frontiers of Bengal was the lending of British troops to the ruler of Audh, com-

<sup>1</sup> Warren Hastings was born at Churchill, in Oxfordshire, in 1732, and died in 1818, at the age of eighty-six years, at Daylesford, in Oxfordshire.



LORD CLIVE

From the collection in the National  
Portrait Gallery, London, RA



WARREN HASTINGS

From the painting by T. Kettle in the  
National Portrait Gallery



pletely to defeat and scatter the Rohilla Afghans, who had seized a tract of country (the Bareilly district in Northern India), from which they were raiding and harassing the Hindu peasantry, and in reality striving, by an alliance with the Marathas in the south, to displace not only the remains of the Mughal Empire; but still more to push out the intruding Europeans, whose efforts to establish peace and safety for life and property were not appreciated.<sup>1</sup>

The British nation treated Warren Hastings with a lack of appreciation, a degree of ingratitude, almost without parallel in our strange colonial history, though easily to be matched in that of France. In fact, we acted very much towards Warren Hastings as Louis XV did towards Dupleix. Hastings was, quite rightly, expected to govern India with the assistance of a Council appointed more or less by the British Crown. But the councillors selected and maintained devoted almost the whole of their energies—they were narrow-minded, conceited, factious men—to harassing Warren Hastings at every turn. They libelled him with such energy and determination that it has taken something like a hundred years to disentangle his memory and his achievements from the misrepresen-

<sup>1</sup> It is true that in those days the directors of the East India Company were greedy of money, and expected their servants in India to send them home a large proportion of the taxes and fines levied on the natives of India; but in return for this raising of money in India something like real justice was introduced wherever direct British rule was established, as well as absolute security for life and property, freedom of religion, useful and beneficial public works. One of the first things which the British attempted to do when they got control over Bengal and other parts of India was to arrest the devastating famines which at intervals depopulated large tracts of country. Two years before Warren Hastings took up his governorship of Bengal a famine occurred in that province, which was officially reported to have caused the death of about ten millions of people—an exaggeration possibly, but at most an exaggeration. The mere rate of increase of the population of British India since the substitution of the British as rulers in place of Hindus, Afghans, Turks, Mongols, and Persians is evidence that enormous pains had been taken to check, or mitigate by means of public works, the effects of these periods of scarcity of food, which in former days in India, as in Africa, would completely depopulate large countries for long or short periods of time.

tations and lies of Sir Philip Francis, whose name should have a big black mark placed against it in the records of the British Empire, or indeed of the civilized world. He was one of that class of intellects which, unable to originate anything great itself, turns all its ability to the destruction of the schemes of geniuses.

Between 1775—when the British Government of India found itself obliged to interfere in the affairs of the Marathas—and 1805, or perhaps one might say 1818 (the conclusion of the last Maratha war) the British forces, allied on some occasions with the large Muhammadan kingdom of Haidarabad, in the Dekkan, completed the main conquest of India. The four or five thousand British infantry and artillery, and the hundred thousand (or so) native soldiers were led by such brilliant military officers as General THOMAS GODDARD, who conquered Gujarat; Captain (afterwards SIR HOME) POPHAM, who snatched by a brilliant action the almost impregnable fortress of Gwalior; Lord Cornwallis, and Lord Mornington,<sup>1</sup> who were successively Governors-General of India; General (afterwards LORD) HARRIS, who captured Seringapatam in 1799; Sir Arthur Wellesley (afterwards DUKE OF WELLINGTON); General (afterwards LORD) LAKE; General SIR DAVID OCHTERLONY, who brought Nipal to reason in 1814; the MARQUIS OF HASTINGS, who completely conquered and dispersed the Pindari bandits of Central India (1817); and SIR JOHN MALCOLM, who completed the conquest of the Marathas. These great men between them made the British nation absolutely supreme throughout India, from Cape Comorin in the south to the Himalayas on the north, while in 1796 advantage had been taken of the Napoleonic wars to occupy the Island of Ceylon, and the Dutch Government was

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards the MARQUIS WELLESLEY.







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replaced as the ruling power of that island by its annexation to the British Empire in 1796.

With the conquest of the Marathas had come the transference of the puppet Mughal Emperor of Delhi from the control of these Hindu warriors to British hands. The descendant of this once-powerful Tatar-Persian dynasty, which had in the early part of the seventeenth century done so much to facilitate the establishment of the English in India as traders, passed into their keeping as a pensioner. He still ruled within the walls of Delhi a mimic Court, controlled and guarded by the British forces encamped on the low hills outside that city.

By 1818 the extent of the British Empire over India only differed from that of to-day in area by stopping short of Burma on the east, and of the Panjab, Sind, and Baluchistan on the west.

## CHAPTER XI

### Bhutan and Tibet

In describing the early pioneer journeys to and from India, reference has already been made to Tibet, not nearly so much of a "forbidden land" to foreigners before the Chinese conquest in 1720 as it became afterwards. The name "Tibet" would seem to be derived from the name of one tribe—Tu-bat—and to have been in use by the Persians, but the last syllable—*bet* (equivalent to *bat*, *bhut*, *bod*, and similar particles appearing in the place and tribal names of so much of north-eastern India and Central Asia)—betrays the real indigenous name of the country. The Tibeto-Burman races have played a great part in the ancient colonization of India and Further India. They were, of course, of the Mongolian stock, and included those legendary and existing Naga or "Snake-worshipping" tribes, still to be found in parts of Assam, and once the inhabitants of Bengal, Nipal, and Kashmir, until they were dispossessed, partially or wholly, by the Aryans and Dravidians.

The first modern explorer of Tibet (after the Capuchin and Jesuit missionaries) was a remarkable pioneer, SAMUEL VAN DE PUTTE. This young Dutchman, born at Flushington in the year 1690, had been chosen an alderman of that city in 1715, after taking his Doctor's degree at the age of twenty-four in the year previously. But although a great career opened for him in Holland, when he was twenty-

eight he left that country for three years' travel in the East. The three years lengthened out indefinitely. By 1724 he had reached the south of India, after travelling overland from Aleppo to Persia. He then turned northwards through the Mughal territories (dressed as a native, and mastering native languages and native theories of religion) until he crossed the Himalayas, and actually entered Lhasa, the capital of Tibet. Here he found still residing Roman Catholic missionaries, amongst whom was Father Gaubil.<sup>1</sup>

Samuel Van de Putte acquired the Tibetan language and became very intimate with the Lamas. After some years' residence at Lhasa (where, as elsewhere, he was looked upon as a saint, because of his excessive goodness of disposition) he dressed as a Chinese mandarin, and accompanied a deputation of Lamas to Pekin. For some reason, through all these journeys he used mainly the Italian language, partly, no doubt, owing to his intercourse with Italian missionaries in Tibet and China. After a short stay at Pekin he returned to Lhasa, and then re-entered India, and was actually in Delhi at the time of its sack by Nadir Shah in 1737. Afterwards he left India for Java, the Malay Peninsula, and Sumatra. Finally he died at Batavia, the capital of Java, in 1745, unhappily leaving directions in his will that all his papers should be burnt, in case a wrong use should be made of them and erroneous descriptions of the East published after his death with the authority of his name.

All during the first half of the eighteenth century the power and influence of China over Tibet was steadily increasing, and was fortified from time to time by the

<sup>1</sup> There had been repeated Roman Catholic missions to Tibet through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but settled work came to an end about 1745.

assassination of Tibetan officials who did not see eye to eye with the Chinese. It was through the influence and at the desire of the Chinese that the Catholic priests were finally expelled from Tibet (Lhasa) in 1760, eventually coming to safe refuge in the British-governed province of Bengal.

As soon as Warren Hastings had assumed the government of Bengal in 1772, his attention was drawn to Tibet by the receipt of a letter from the Teshu Lama,<sup>1</sup> who wished to bring about peace between the people of Bhutan (an outlying Tibetan state) and the British. The Tibetan stock was at one time very warlike, sturdy, and aggressive; for it succeeded in colonizing and recolonizing the region of Nipal to the south of the Himalaya Mountains, that of Sikkim, and part of Kuch Behar, and the countries now called Bhutan, Assam, and even Burma, as the Burmese people for the most part belong to the same original stock as the Tibetans, mixed, however, with an ancient negroid strain. Indeed, from Tibet, the central home, seem to have come in very ancient times most of the races which colonized Further India and Malaysia, and the south of China. To the north of Bengal, after the eleventh century

<sup>1</sup> There have been usually, since the fifteenth century, two great Lamas ruling Tibet. They were originally the abbots of populous Buddhist monasteries at Galdan, near Lhasa, and at Teshu Lumbo (Tashi Lunpo) in Southern Tibet, near the Brahmaputra or Tsanpu River. They were gradually recognized, from the times of Jenghiz Khan onwards, and by the Chinese more especially, as the spiritual and temporal sovereigns of Tibet, after the extinction of the dynasties of Tibetan kings. They became known as the Dalai Lama (of Lhasa, the real head of the state) and the Teshu or Panchen Lama of Teshu Lumbo. Both were, and are, supposed to be re-incarnations of some mythical Buddhist saints, companions or missionaries of the Buddha, who have become in time, and in the corruptions of the Buddhist religions, gods ruling the heavens and the earth. Both the Dalai Lama and Teshu Lama are chosen soon after birth by the surviving Grand Lama, and are then declared to be re-incarnations, and are brought up as God's vicegerent on earth. The ordinary term *lama* simply means a Tibetan monk, a saintly personage. There are also female lamas, nuns ("anni"), or holy women. Gailong is the term for an ordained priest of the Lama religion. There is also a third Grand Lama, the Taranath Lama, living in Mongolia.

A.D., the peoples of Tibetan stocks were getting the better of the softer, more effeminate Hindus, who were of mixed Aryan, Mongol, and Negroid ancestry. But for the intervention of the Afghans and the British, the Tibetan peoples of Mongolian race would have conquered a good deal of North-east India and have become serious rivals to the Hindus and Mughals.

Warren Hastings was much struck with the statesman-like character and "Christianity" of the Teshu Lama's letter of intercession. He decided to send an embassy first of all to the Deb Raja or ruler of Bhutan, and also to the Teshu Lama of Southern Tibet, with the idea of opening up commercial and friendly intercourse between the great plateau of Tibet and the great plains of India. He selected for the leadership of this embassy, Mr. GEORGE BOGLE, a young Scotsman from Daldowie on the Clyde, near Glasgow. Bogle was specially enjoined by Warren Hastings in his private instructions to obtain living examples of shawl goats (see p. 236) so that this breed could be established in India; also one or more pair of the yak oxen of Tibet, still little known to Europeans.<sup>1</sup> Warren Hastings also wanted fresh ripe walnuts, so that he might introduce the planting of that tree into Northern India. He also enjoined on his envoy (in terms which read singularly modern, though they were written in 1774) enquiries into the ethnology, the natural productions, manufactures, and commerce of Tibet and Bhutan. Lastly, Bogle was supplied by Warren Hastings with a quantity of seed potatoes, with instructions to plant them at every stage in Bhutan. It seemed to that far-sighted man that

<sup>1</sup> The Yak (*Bos grunniens*) is a species of ox peculiar to the Tibetan plateau. It is distantly related to the Bisons, and its sides and throat develop a tremendously heavy mane, while the heavily plumed tail is valued in India as a fly whisk.

the climate and situation of Bhutan should make it a splendid country for the growing of the potato. Bogle constantly notes in his journal<sup>1</sup> the steps he took to plant the potatoes in favourable localities; but I cannot find any record of the experiment having turned out the success that it deserved to be.

Bogle was accompanied by Mr. Hamilton, a surgeon. He left Calcutta in the middle of May, 1774, at the hottest season of the year, and, travelling at night, passed as quickly as he might through Kuch Behar into Bhutan. The following is the description he gives of his first lodging in the country of Bhutan. The house was thatched, the floor made of laths of bamboo, and raised 4 feet above the ground. The walls were of reeds tied together with strips of bamboo, and the stair was a stump of a tree, with notches cut into it. It had much the look of a bird cage, and the space below, being turned into a pig sty, contributed little to its pleasantness. The head man of the village and some of the neighbours got tipsy with a bottle of rum.

The only way of transporting goods in these hilly countries was by kulis (porters). The roads were too steep, narrow, and rugged for any other conveyance, and the rivers too stony and rapid for boats. The carriers were impressed by the head man from amongst the inhabitants—though they seldom raised any objection—and received an allowance for their food from the person on whose service they were employed, their task being to convey the traveller and his goods to the next village, where they were relieved by other porters obtained in the same

<sup>1</sup> Those who desire to study the past history of Bhutan and Tibet should read the admirable *Narratives of George Bogle in Tibet and Journey of Thomas Manning to Lhasa* by Sir Clements Markham, 1876.

manner. The porters were selected indifferently from men, women, or young people sufficiently strong to carry. A girl of eighteen (writes Bogle) travelled one day for nearly 18 miles with a burden of 70 to 75 pounds weight. Bogle and his companion rode the rough but surefooted mountain ponies. As they passed through the villages on their way they had to be careful to avoid attacks from the huge and fierce Tibetan mastiffs, a very large variety of dog, in appearance something between a mastiff, a bloodhound, and a Newfoundland.

The country of Bhutan proved to be mountainous, cool, and moist, yet richly forested, and producing many fruit trees familiar to us in Europe—apricots, peaches, apples, pears, and mulberries. Amongst other resemblances to Europe in the vegetation were forests of walnut, elderberry, holly, willow, ash, aspen, sweet-brier, roses, bramble, juniper, wormwood, sage, thistles, southernwood, strawberries, primroses, and ground ivy. The people also cultivated turnips of a very large size, leeks, shallots, water melons, musk melons, cucumbers, egg plants (brinjals), cherries, and currant bushes. Most of the houses were of the birdcage kind described by Bogle, though some of them were built of stone. The innumerable rivers were bridged rather cleverly, either with wooden bridges or suspension bridges made of iron chains. One such iron bridge was 147 feet long and 6 feet broad; but it was an uncomfortable way of crossing a river, since it swayed at every movement.

At last they reached the Bhutan capital of Tassisudon, where there was a palace of the Deb Raja<sup>1</sup> with golden

<sup>1</sup> Bhutan has for some time been governed by two supreme authorities, the Dharm Raja, an incarnation of a deity or Buddha, and the Deb Raja, who is elected usually by the leading councillors.



turrets. The Deb Raja was absent on their arrival; but when he returned the balconies of the palace had been covered with Buddhist priests, all clad in red cloth of local manufacture. A band played at intervals brass trumpets, fifes, castanets, and drums. The Deb Raja, attended by a great escort of men and horses, standard bearers and musicians, rode on horseback covered with a scarlet cloak, wearing a large yellow hat, in shape like a cardinal's, attended on either side by a man who flourished a fly fan made of a yak's tail, and followed by a servant in the rear who held up a small white-silk umbrella.

When Bogle interviewed the Deb Raja (after passing through three courts crammed with spectators, climbing two iron-plated ladders, and waiting in an antechamber hung with arms) he found the latter seated on his throne or pulpit in the presence chamber, and dressed in the festival habit of a Buddhist priest or gailong—that is to say, a scarlet satin cloak and a gilded mitre. An attendant kept twirling a white umbrella over his head. The pulpit on which he sat was gilt, and surrounded with silver ewers and vases, and the floor was covered with carpets. Twelve officers of state were seated round him on cushions close to the wall. After making a series of bows to this potentate, Bogle was placed on a cushion in the middle of the apartment, and a meal was at once served. The attendants brought rice, butter, treacle, tea, walnuts, dates, apricots, cucumbers, and other fruits on copper platters. When much of this food had been disposed of, another servant entered with a silver kettle of buttered tea, and having poured a little into his palm and drunk it off, filled a vessel with the greasy liquid for the Raja, and then served it to all the officers of state, who received it in little black wooden cups, which they carried with them every-

where inside their tunics. To Bogle was given a china cup. The Deb Raja then said a grace, in which he was joined by all the company. After this the tea was drunk, and every man nipped his cup well round and put it back in his bosom. Then Bogle was solemnly dressed in a flowered-satin gown, a red handkerchief was tied round him for a girdle, and the Raja bound up his head with another handkerchief and squeezed his temples. After that an image of Buddha was put on his head, and prayers were muttered over him; his shoulders were draped with silk handkerchiefs, and he returned to his cushion to drink more tea, a cup or two of whisky, and to munch betel nut. The walls of this presence chamber were hung round with Chinese landscapes painted on satin. Here and there images were placed in niches, and before them were censers burning incense and lamps fed with butter. Amongst the curious bric-à-brac of silver, ivory, silks, ribbons, and artificial flowers was a print of an English female celebrity of those days—Lady Waldegrave—who had recently married the Duke of Gloucester, brother of George III. How this version of her portrait had reached Bhutan, history does not say; but it was regarded by the Court of the Deb Raja as being some strange foreign goddess worthy of worship.

The spiritual ruler of Bhutan (now known as the Dharm Raja) seems to have been known to Bogle as the Lama Rimboché. He was a very strict Buddhist, and was dreadfully upset at the idea of a fly being killed, so that it might be exhibited (enormously magnified) under Dr. Hamilton's microscope! In Bhutan, as in Tibet, the higher authorities were very fantastical in their scruples about killing anything; but they did not seem to mind the common people doing so, and were much more

meat eaters than the Hindus. The Lama Rimboché gave excellent dinners to Bogle and his party, consisting of boiled rice with butter, stewed kid with slices of cucumber, the last well seasoned with red pepper; and a dessert of fruits and curds of milk, which, after being dried, were fried with butter and honey.

The palace of the Deb Raja of Bhutan was divided into courts, flanked with galleries supported on wooden pillars running round them, "like the inns in England". The different officers had each their apartments. The gailongs or priests lived in a large church, beside which there was a smaller chapel where they officiated, and where the larger images were kept. The images were mostly decent and well-proportioned figures, sitting cross-legged. There was a large gallery above the church, painted with festoons of skulls and bones, whither the public congregated to see the ceremonies. Bogle went there once or twice, and the Raja, thinking he was interested in these things, used to invite him to attend church at break of day and at other hours. During a great festival which occurred at the time of his visit, all the governors of the Bhutanese provinces repaired to the presence of the Raja, and there were dances every day in one of the courts of the palace. About twenty gailongs, dressed in various-coloured satin cloaks and gilded mitres, were seated on a bench, with each a large tabor or drum, resting on a stick which they held in one hand, and in the other a crooked rod of iron, with a knob at the end of it, with which they beat time to a priest of superior rank. The latter, seated in the middle of the group, struck together two silver cups with a melodious sound. A yellow satin curtain was drawn before the door of the lesser church, from behind which ran out six, eight, ten, and sometimes a score of priests in masquerade

dresses, with masks like horses' heads, beaks of birds, or other grotesque figures. They danced and capered with whimsical gestures, the burden of which was to throw down their heads till the red tuft of hair touched the ground, and then suddenly toss it up again. Between the acts the peasants sang songs or performed clownish tricks.

The walls of the Deb Raja's palace were between two and three stories high, and built after the Tibetan fashion, inclining inwards. What with stairs, pillars, galleries, and roofs, there was an immense quantity of timber about it, and the demand for timber in its construction stripped naked several mountains. The roofs were of planks two or three deep, and kept down by stones. The roof of the portion of the palace set apart for the Lama Rimboché (a great tower) was gilded all over, ornamented with dragons, and shaped like the top of a Chinese pagoda.

Bogle goes on to remark that the Bhutanese, like their neighbours in Bengal, burn their dead. "One of the priests in the palace happening to die, I went to see the ceremony. It was the third day after his death. I found about forty priests assembled in a tent on the side of a rivulet which runs by the palace, and employed in chanting their prayers, while some workmen were cutting timber and forming the funeral pile. As they objected to my remaining near the tent, I crossed the brook and ascended a little bank which overlooked the place where the obsequies were to be performed. At about 20 yards from the pile a temporary booth was erected, from which tea was occasionally distributed to the clergy, and some large pots that were boiling on the fire seemed to promise a more solid repast. The priests continued at different intervals to recite their offices in a low voice, accompanying them with the tinkling of bells and the sound of tabors

and trumpets; and some old women, placed at a distance, were counting their beads and repeating their *Om mani padmi hums*!<sup>1</sup> When night came on, the body, wrapped in a linen sheet, was silently brought, and at the same instant that it was laid on the pile a shrill pipe, like a cat-call, was sounded. All this passed in the dark. Then a relation of the deceased came with a lighted brand in his hand, and set fire to the pile. Two of the priests fed it with fresh wood; another, dressed in white, threw in from time to time spices, salt, butter, oil, betel leaf, and twenty other articles; and the rest joined in a flourish with trumpets, bells, and tabors while each of these different rites were performing. The fire burned slowly, a heavy shower of rain came on, and I returned home without waiting till the conclusion of the ceremony. It is usual, I am told, to collect the ashes on the third day after the funeral, and carrying them in solemn procession to throw them into the River Chinchu."

The Deb Raja of Bhutan, though slightly suspicious of Bogle's motives in entering Tibet, nevertheless showed him a degree of hospitality which might be looked for in vain in modern Bhutan; for somehow, since 1860, our relations with this "Tibet south of the Himalayas" have been marked by unfriendliness on both sides. The Deb Raja, dressed in his priestly vesture of scarlet cotton, "with gilded mitre on his head and an umbrella twirling over him", entertained Bogle at a farewell tea party in his palace, with the usual tea mixed with butter and spices, after which Bogle was conducted to the throne, where the Raja bound his temples with another satin handker-

<sup>1</sup> *Om mani padme hum*, said to be a Sanskrit phrase and to mean: "Oh! the Jewel in the lotus! Amen" (the lotus—water lily—being the symbol of the highest perfection). It is the favourite prayer formula of the Tibetan Buddhists, and the one most frequently inserted in their prayer wheels.

chief, and, squeezing them hard betwixt his hands, muttered some prayers over him. Then the tea was succeeded by a cup of whiskey fresh and hot out of the still, followed by more tea and by several more graces or thanksgivings, and by the chewing of betel nuts.

From Tassisudon (or Tasichozong), the capital of Bhutan,<sup>1</sup> Bogle and Hamilton rode westwards into the Chumbi valley and so crossed the Himalayas into Tibet. Almost as soon as they entered that country (descending the northern slopes of the mountains) they became aware of features and objects peculiar to that plateau of hot summers and Arctic winters. The villages had the superb Tibetan mastiffs, or rather sheep dogs (though these are also found in Bhutan and Nipal) whom Bogle describes as of large size, shaggy like maned lions, and extremely fierce, especially after dark. On the snowy plains at high altitudes were herds of Kiang (a large equine which is midway between horse and ass), and of the Chiru or *Pantholops* antelope—a creature with a swollen nose, a woolly coat, and very long upright horns, like an exaggerated gazelle. There were wild yaks (probably of very large size) and there were domestic yaks, stunted, black, bushy-tailed, and with humped shoulders. The domestic sheep were fine large animals, with abundance of wool, and with twisted horns extended laterally and horizontally. Two-humped camels were used as beasts of burden. The commonest bird seems to have been some kind of large crow or raven. “I was amused” (he writes) “for a long time with observing the numerous ravens that were playing about the castle and floating over the lake. I did not know that they were so social, so frolicsome, and so joyous. They wantoned about in a thousand different manners and

<sup>1</sup> The modern capital is at Punakha, to the north-east.

postures, sometimes pursuing each other, and making a mock flight; sometimes separately; sometimes rising; sometimes falling with closed wings; sometimes floating awhile in the air on their backs; sometimes lying edge-wise; sometimes whirling round the building with vast rapidity; and all with an eagerness and joyousness of motions and cries and screams that showed the overflowings of happy sensations too plainly to be mistaken. Many of the ravens about this lake, and many in Lhasa, emit a peculiar and extraordinary sound, which I call metallic. It is as if their throat was a metal tube, with a stiff metal elastic musical spring fixed in it, which, pulled aside and let go, should give a vibrating note, sounding like the pronunciation of the word *poing* or *scroong*, with the lips protruded, and with a certain musical accent. The other is similar to that of the ravens in Europe, yet still has something of the metallic sound in it. Whether there are two species of ravens here, or whether it be that the male and female of the same species have each their peculiar note, I cannot say."

Bogle journeyed across Southern Tibet, crossed the famous Tsanpu or Upper Brahmaputra River, and ascended the mountains which flank its northern basin. Here, at a place called Desheripgay, at an altitude of 12,220 feet, he met the Teshu Lama, the second greatest ruler of Tibet. The people of this part of Tibet he describes as a hard-featured race, and notices (quite rightly) their physical resemblance to Malays. Monasteries and nunneries abounded throughout Tibet; but the rule of life of the nuns or members of female religious communities does not seem to have been over strict. Many of them were widows who had retired to the convent with their daughters after the husband's death. He writes, after a visit to one of these communities:—

"The two nuns are as merry and good-humoured as their mother. The eldest, who is about seven- or eight-and-twenty, is dark-complexioned and hard-featured. The youngest is about nineteen; remarkably fair and ruddy. Their dress is the same as that of the gailongs. The head shaven, the arms bare, a red frieze jacket, reaching a little below the waist, a piece of coarse red woollen cloth thrown over their shoulders, a petticoat of red serge falling a little below the knee, and red woollen hose soled with leather, and gartered under the knee. They, as well as the priests, are not allowed to wear any kind of ornament, except it be a few beads of coral strung with their rosaries."

Some of the monasteries had from five to six thousand monks inhabiting them.

The Teshu Lama, who received Bogle at Desheripgay (because his usual residence near the Tsanpu at Teshu Lumbo was being disinfected after an outbreak of small-pox) was described as being about forty years of age, of low stature, fair—almost white—complexion, with a smiling face, small black eyes, short black hair, and scrubby beard and whiskers. He was merry and entertaining in conversation, telling pleasant stories with a good deal of humour and action. His charity was unbounded, and, like his colleague the Grand Dalai Lama of Lhasa, he was adored by the people. "I endeavoured", wrote Bogle, "to find out in his character those defects which are inseparable from humanity, but he is so universally beloved that I had no success: not a man could find it in his heart to speak ill of him." This indeed seems even down to recent times to have been the case with both the Grand Lamas of Tibet, chosen for the office when mere babies, and trained carefully through their youth to govern both Church and State. They cer-



tainly became rulers that were deeply loved and widely venerated, and it makes one a little sad to think that their rule has now been somewhat brutally swept away to give place to that of a Chinese Governor or Minister Resident. [It is true that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a good deal of the political control of Tibet was in the hands of a lay "Regent" (Rinpoche) to whom some of the sovereign powers of the two Lamas were delegated.] Bogle and Hamilton travelled south again with the Teshu Lama to his real headquarters at Teshu Lumbo, where they were well and comfortably lodged in his palace.

Soon after their arrival the Teshu Lama went down to the large hall adjoining their apartments, in order to bless the people. The hall was about 60 feet long and 50 broad, the ceiling supported by a number of high pillars, and the walls adorned with mythological paintings. The Lama seated himself upon a lofty throne, raised with cushions, under an alcove at one end of the room. There was another throne, not so high, on his right hand, which belonged to a minister of state, the Chanzo Kusho, who sat, however, on a low cushion at the foot of the Lama's throne, the Sapon Chumbo—another official—standing beside it. Immediately without the alcove were placed four Lamas or abbots of inferior rank. Bogle was seated upon a cushion next to them, and opposite to him sat a Kalmuk Lama, lately arrived from the Khalka Lama, called by the Hindus Taranath,<sup>1</sup> and close to him sat the Dalai Lama's lieutenant or representative. Bogle came in soon after the Lama was seated, and, having made three profound bows, presented him with a handkerchief, "which he always received with his own hands", He spoke to Bogle for about two minutes, enquiring about

<sup>1</sup> See p. 266.

his health, about what he thought of Teshu Lumbo, and how he liked his accommodation. After this, crowds of people—*gailongs*, *annis* (nuns), Kampas (people from North Tibet), Kalmuks, governors of all the neighbouring castles, men, women, and children came to make their offerings and obeisances to the Teshu Lama, bringing purses of gold, talents of silver, pieces of Chinese satin, bundles of tea or of fruits, dried sheep's carcases, bags of flour or of rice, small images with a bit of yellow satin wrapped mantle-wise over them, books of religion, bundles of incense, rods called *pais*, bells, and a variety of different articles. Those of low degree gave only a white satin handkerchief. Each went up in his turn to the Lama's throne, and the Lama touched their heads as if conferring a blessing. The young *gailongs* immediately after the imposition of hands retired; but Bogle could not help observing with pleasure the attention which the Lama paid to some of the old *gailongs*, speaking to them for a minute or two with that affable and engaging look which "wins the hearts of men". Between whiles the Lama, and everybody that was seated, drank a dish of tea. Bogle had his out of the Lama's golden teapot, an honour bestowed only upon Chanzo Kusho, the inferior Lamas, and the agents of the Dalai Lama and the Taranath. There was a company of fifteen young boys, from seven to twelve years old, dressed in different-coloured chintzes, with white turbans, and small axes in their right hands, who at intervals danced before the Lama, to the music of hautboys, flutes, kettledrums, and bells, keeping time with their axes, their hoppings and their twirlings. Another part of the entertainment consisted of public disputes, which were conducted by pairs of *gailongs*. Religion was the subject of their debates—perhaps the immortality of the soul, or

the unchangeable nature of right and wrong—but Bogle's ignorance of the language (the Teshu Lama conversed with him in Hindustani) rendered them quite unintelligible. They were carried on with much vociferation and feigned warmth, and embellished with great powers of action, such as clapping hands, shaking the head, &c. Dinner was afterwards brought in. Six large, low tables, covered with wooden, painted platters, filled with Chinese and Kashmiri dried fruits, sugar, treacle cakes, and sweetmeats. Piles of biscuits and dried sheep's carcasses were set before the Lama. Two tables garnished in the like manner were placed before the minister known as the Chanzo Kusho; and some bread, pieces of dried mutton, plates of fruits and sweetmeats were set down before Bogle, Hamilton, and each of the other guests. After drinking a dish of tea, bowls of hashed mutton and of pounded rice, also mutton boiled to a jelly, were presented to the guests, who ate of them heartily. Then a joint of mutton boiled and another roasted, upon the same wooden plate, were served up to each. Another minister of state, the Sapon Chumbo, distributed a dessert of fruits, sweetmeats, &c., according to a list which he held in his hand, sending some of them to people without the palace and the rest to the guests. Bogle's dessert was presented upon silver dishes. Then everybody retired.

After this feast the Lama went into a gallery which was on the same floor as Bogle's room, and, walking up to the image of the Buddha, fell down three times before it. The adjoining temple contained thirteen gigantic figures, about 8 feet high if they were erect; but they were all, except the image of the god of war and another, sitting cross-legged. They were of copper gilt, holding a pot with flowers or fruit in their laps, and represented as

though covered with mantles, with crowns or mitres on their heads: they were far from being badly executed, especially in regard to the draperies. The thrones upon which they sat were also of copper gilt, and adorned with turquoises, cornelians, and other stones of moderate value. Behind each figure, against a background of carved wood, were china vases, some of them very handsome, or glass ware, filled with grain, fruit, or imitation flowers; a variety of shells, some ostrich eggs, coconuts, and a number of other heterogeneous articles. Round the necks of the images were strings of coral, ill-shaped pearls, cornelian, agates, and other stones, and their crowns were set with the like ornaments. The ceiling of the temple gallery was covered with satins of a variety of patterns, some Chinese, some Kalmuk, some European, brought through Russia and overland. The gallery was lighted on the south side by five windows, and the walls between were hung with paintings of the different deities and views of heaven. The opposite side, where the images were, was shut in, all the length of the gallery, with a net of ironwork. "The Lama went within, and as he went along sprinkled rice upon the images. It was a kind of consecration. When he came out we sat down to tea, and the Lama explained to me some of the paintings, and marked the different countries from which the silks overhead had come. At each end of the gallery was a large collection of books deposited in small niches, or rather pigeonholes. Having finished our tea, we went by a back stair into my room, which the Lama also bespattered with rice. After examining the furniture, with a set of chessmen in battle array upon the table, he passed into Mr. Hamilton's room, and having there performed the same rites of dedication, I took my leave and the Lama proceeded to his own end of the palace."

After a stay of about two months in Teshu Lumbo and its vicinity, Bogle set out to return to India, while his host the Teshu Lama was preparing on his part to make a journey to the Emperor of China at Peking. Both parties promised themselves a meeting at the Court of the Chinese Empire, there to arrange, with the consent of the Chinese, a treaty of friendship and commerce between Tibet and British India.

“Teshu Lama repeated his concern at my *départure*; the satisfaction he had received in being informed of the customs of Europe, and concluded with many wishes for my prosperity, and that he would not fail to pray to Heaven in my behalf. He spoke all this in a manner and with a look very different from the studied and formal compliments of Hindustan. I never could reconcile myself to taking a last leave of anybody; and what from the Lama's pleasant and amiable character, what from the many favours and civilities he had shown me, I could not help being particularly affected. He observed it, and in order to cheer me mentioned his hopes of seeing me again. He threw a handkerchief about my neck, put his hand upon my head, and I retired.”

Bogle, before his departure from Tibet, might have succeeded in visiting Lhasa and in concluding an advantageous commercial treaty between Tibet and British India; but the temporal ruler or Regent of Tibet—the Gesub Rinpoche—was much under Chinese influence, and refused to allow Bogle to visit Lhasa and opposed the idea of any commercial understanding with Great Britain. Bogle, therefore, returned to Calcutta and reported the results of his mission to Warren Hastings; but proposed that to meet the views of the Teshu Lama he should be sent later to Peking. Warren Hastings approved of this

plan. The Teshu Lama did proceed to China, and did commence the negotiations for a pact between China, Tibet, and Great Britain; but, unhappily, he died of smallpox in the latter part of 1780, while Bogle himself died of fever at Calcutta in April, 1781. The death of these two men proved to be a disaster to the future friendly and unrestrained relations between Tibet and British India, hampered as they were and have been by Chinese suspicion, British impatience, the unruliness of Kashmir and Nipal, and the slow advance of Russia towards Mongolia. Bogle was succeeded as envoy to Tibet by Captain SAMUEL TURNER. This officer travelled to Teshu Lumbo, and saw "the very handsome child" who had (at the age of twelve months or so) been declared to be the reincarnation of the kindly Teshu Lama who had died of smallpox at Pekin.

In 1792 an extraordinary event happened which marred the friendly relations between Britain and Tibet for more than a hundred years afterwards. The large country of Nipal, on the southern slopes of the Himalayas, between Bhutan and the Panjab, had recently come under the power of the Gurkha tribe of mountaineers, a people mainly of Mongolian origin but Hinduized in religion. Developing very warlike instincts after the decay of the Mughal Empire (and especially remarkable in war for their terrific curved knives or *kukris*), they conquered what we now know as Nipal, and also the Tibetan state of Demijong (Sikkim) to the east, a country which commands the easiest route between India and Tibet, and which later on came under British protection. About 1790 the Gurkhas began to develop the idea of a raid on Southern Tibet, to secure the treasure of the Teshu Lama at Teshu Lumbo. They were already in relations with the British Governor-General of India.

This last—Lord Cornwallis—seems to have made no effort to stop the Nipalese from wantonly invading Tibet, not even though the Dalai Lama of Lhasa appealed to British friendliness to intervene. The Nipalese carried out their raid successfully, the Tibetan Government appealed to China for help, and with almost incredible rapidity and efficiency a Chinese army of seventy thousand men marched from the western frontiers of China proper into Southern Tibet, drove out the Nipalese, and, as these would not restore their plunder or Tibetan prisoners, pursued them right down into Nipal, and inflicted on them a severe defeat only 20 miles from their capital of Kathmandu. The British Government, as represented by Lord Cornwallis, which had not restrained the Nipalese (as they could have done) from invading Tibet, now refused to come to their assistance and repulse the Chinese invaders. The result was that the Government of Nipal had to declare itself tributary to China, while it henceforth resolutely maintained its complete independence of British India, though it is surrounded on three sides by British territory.

Hitherto no British pioneer traveller had made his way to Lhasa, the principal capital of Tibet (as far as we know with any certainty). This achievement, however, was accomplished in 1811-2 by THOMAS MANNING, of Cambridge, a traveller of independent means, who had first visited China and then resolved to enter Tibet. Though not a doctor of medicine, he had certain medical qualifications. Without the knowledge of the authorities he made his way through Bhutan into Tibet, and on the frontiers of that forbidden land met the Chinese general in command, whom he cured of some malady. In return for his services the Chinese general took him to Lhasa, where he resided till the early spring of 1812. So far as

the Tibetans were concerned, he could have gone on living there; but the Chinese Government heard of the presence of an Englishman in Lhasa, and ordered him to be sent back to India by the way he came. Manning's journey was succeeded by the more important one of MOORCROFT, an Indian civil servant, who entered Tibet from the south-west, from Kumaon, and discovered the Lakes of Manasarowar. Moorcroft probably lived for some time at Lhasa; but was murdered on his way back, about 1838. Thenceforth Tibet became almost a sealed book to the British,<sup>1</sup> who only managed to explore and map the southern half of the country, by sending thither native Indian surveyors trained to take observations and make maps; but not differing in appearance, dress, or outward religious observances from other Indians who might drift into Tibet as pilgrims, doctors, or merchants.

The great pioneer of knowledge and European civilization in Nipal was BRIAN HOUGHTON HODGSON, who incidentally did much between 1824 and 1843 to improve our relations with the Grand Lamas of Tibet. Hodgson was a native of Cheshire, and born near Prestbury in 1800. He lived to the age of ninety-four. He entered the service of the East India Company in 1816, and in 1820 was sent as assistant to the British Resident in Nipal. In 1833 he became Resident himself. Nearly all we know of that still-closed kingdom we owe to the industry of Hodgson, whose researches into the history, racial types, languages, religion, fauna, and flora of this marvellously interesting sub-Himalayan country<sup>2</sup> were published at different times between 1830 and 1882. In 1842 he fell out with Lord

<sup>1</sup> Lhasa and much of Tibet were visited and explored in a very remarkable fashion between the years 1844-6 by two Jesuit missionaries, the Abbé Evariste Huc and the Rev. Joseph Gabet, coming from Northern China and returning to Southern China.

<sup>2</sup> It is in Nipal that the highest mountain in the world—Mount Everest—is situated.



Ellenborough over the policy to be adopted towards the native government of Nipal, and in the following year he resigned his services under the East India Company. His interest in the Himalayan regions, however, was so great that he could not keep away from them, and in 1845 he settled as a private person at the beautiful hill station of Darjiling, on the frontiers of Sikkim. From here he resumed privately his friendly relations with Nipalese statesmen, and was instrumental in persuading them to allow the recruiting of the warlike Gurkhas for the British-Indian army, and further to remain on friendly terms with Great Britain during the terrible Indian Mutiny of 1857-8. For such services as these, alone, he deserved a peerage and a splendid pension, apart from his invaluable contribution to our knowledge of Buddhism, of ancient and modern Tibetan records, of the history of the centuries of effort on the part of the Roman Church to Christianize Tibet, and of the natural history and anthropology of Nipal. But he was treated with disgraceful ingratitude and studied neglect by the British Government in India and in the United Kingdom. Brian Houghton Hodgson was one of the greatest in achievements among European pioneers in India, and should have his statue set up in some prominent city of our Indian Empire, and his bust in Westminster Abbey.

The mighty Brahmaputra River (some 1800 miles long) rises in South-west Tibet, almost as far to the west as the sources of the Indus. It flows through Southern Tibet under the name of Tsan-pu, then turns abruptly south (as the Dihong), and cutting through the eastern end of the Himalaya range, enters the plains of Assam, and is a lake-like river so broad that it is nowhere bridged. Its upper course has long been an unsolved mystery in Indian geography; but we now

know that it first flows from west to east, then from north-east to south-west, till it joins the Ganges at its mouth. Both the Tsan-pu upper stream and the broad Brahmaputra<sup>1</sup> termination were known to Europeans from the sixteenth century onwards; but the exploration of the connecting bend through the Lokarpo and Abor Mountains only became known in the middle and latter part of the nineteenth century by the fearless journeys of native Indian surveyors—humble, assiduous servants of the State, frequently only known outside the secret records of the Indian Government by an initial. Assam, which the Mughal emperors had vainly tried to assimilate to Bengal, was finally annexed to the British Empire (and then surveyed) in 1838, largely on account of the repeated acts of aggression on the part of the Burmese, who claimed Assam as part of their tributary dominions. The power of Burma under the kings of Ava had been steadily increasing through the eighteenth century, and in 1824 a conflict was forced on the East India Company, in which the forces of the Crown became involved. The first two Burmese wars of 1824-6 and 1852 resulted in the annexation of all the coastal regions of "Further India" down to the Siamese part of the Malay Peninsula. The final war of 1885 led to the complete annexation to the Indian Empire of the remains of the Burmese kingdom of Ava, and of the Shan States, thus bringing the British frontier on the east to the Mekong River and the confines of China and Tongking. Bhutan and Nipal are practically now within the British sphere of influence; but Tibet, in spite of a recent march to Lhasa, has become little else than a Chinese province, and the ambitious and far-sighted projects of the great Warren-Hastings have never been realized.

<sup>1</sup> The name means "Child of Brahma" (the Creator).

## CHAPTER XII

### Panjab, Sind, and Baluchistan

By the victories of Generals Sir Arthur Wellesley (the Duke of Wellington) and Lord Lake over the Mahrattas (1803), of General Ochterlony over the Gurkhas of Nipal (1815), and the diplomacy of the Earl of Minto, the Marquess of Hastings, and Sir John Malcolm, the British Empire in India had been brought, as early as 1817, up to the banks of the River Sutlej, the western confines of Rajputana, and the Rann of Kachh, in the north-west. British authority was arrested in these north-western confines of India by the remarkable development of the Sikh nation. The Sikhs were really a collection of stalwart people in North-west India (the region of the Panjab or Five Rivers) of varied descent. Some bore traces of Greek blood, from the ancient invasions and colonies of the Greeks in Afghanistan and the Panjab. Others were descended from the original Aryan invaders of India, while others again bore distinct traces of Mongolian or Tatar origin. They were only bound together by a common detestation of Muhammadanism and the desire to follow a reformed type of the Hindu religion, which had first been preached in the fifteenth century at and around Lahor by Nanak Shah. Nanak Shah, as reformer and founder of a new faith, was succeeded by a long course of "Gurus", or saintly teachers, who spread the simple

Sikh religion far and wide in the north-west of India. During the reign of the fanatical Emperor Aurangzeb the Sikhs were cruelly persecuted and almost exterminated, and the remnant conceived such a violent hatred of Muhammadanism that this feeling on their part quite changed the history of India. But in the welter caused by the late eighteenth-century wars between Marathas and Mughals, Afghans, Hindus, and British, the Sikhs rose from being a persecuted sect to the position of a proud people, dominating the Panjab and keeping the Afghans at bay. This position was achieved for them by their great leader Ranjit Singh, the "Lion of the Panjab", born in 1780, and at first a military and civil officer in the employment of the Amir of Afghanistan. Ranjit Singh steadily remained the friend of the British, though he took into his service many Frenchmen and Italians to train his artillery and drill his army. The British, however, felt undoubtedly that Sikh rule over these turbulent regions would not extend much beyond the lifetime of Ranjit Singh. The advance of Russia in Central Asia, after the scare of the French under Napoleon had abated, made it necessary for the British Government of India to extend its influence beyond the kingdom of Ranjit Singh into the regions of Afghanistan, Persia, and Turkestan.

Another project which was caressed by the British-Indian Government of the early nineteenth century was the utilization of the Indus River (with its many affluents) as a means of transport between the sea and the fertile lands of Bahawalpur and the Panjab. "To bring goods by the River Indus to Lahor is an old project, but very hard to be effected," wrote Sir Thomas Roe in 1618, apparently alluding at that time to the opposition which would be offered by the Portuguese.

## Pioneers in India

This project of utilizing the Indus lay dormant from the days of Sir Thomas Roe to the 'twenties of the nineteenth century, when the British Government, disembarassed of any further anxiety regarding the course of European affairs, turned itself with resolute purpose to the opening up of India and the enlargement of the Indian Empire. Nearly the whole of the region which lay within the basin of the Indus after it left the glaciers of the Himalaya Mountains was, in the early years of the nineteenth century, under the control of the following native potentates. Most important of these was the Sikh king, Ranjit Singh—the Lion of the Panjab—who had conquered Kashmir from the dominance of the Afghans and the dying empire of the Mughals, and also the region of the Panjab or the Five Rivers: Indus, Jhelam, Chenab, Rabi, and Sutlej.

To the east of Ranjit Singh's Sikh kingdom were one or two independent Sikh or Hindu states, to some extent in alliance with, or protected by, the British Government. Away to the north-east was the independent khanate of Kelat, in Northern Baluchistan, while the valley and delta of the Lower Indus (Eastern Baluchistan and Sind) were under the rule of three or more princes of Arab descent, known as the Amirs of Sind. Ranjit Singh, in the days of his enthusiasm over his successes, hoped to be allowed by the British Government to conquer Sind and then possess a very large kingdom, which would stretch almost from the mouth of the Indus to its sources. The Amirs of Sind, on the other hand, hoped to remain independent both of the Panjab and of British India.

Beyond the lofty mountains of the Hindu Kush was the Afghan kingdom. The Afghans were a mixed race, as already related, mainly united by speaking in common

(with the exception of the Kafir<sup>1</sup> dialects in the mountains) a language belonging to the Persian group of Aryan tongues, Pushtu. Defended on almost all sides by the lofty ranges of mountains which enclose Afghanistan, they began to develop a hardy nationality of their own, and under the leadership of Ahmad Shah of the Durani clan they turned against the Persians in 1747 and made themselves completely independent of that kingdom. As has been related several times in this history, Afghans of Persian or Turkoman stock founded a great number of Muhammadan states in India before and after the coming of the Mughals. When the power of that splendid Mughal Empire was smashed by the Mahrathas, the Afghans reconquered a portion of the Panjab, but were driven out at last by the power of the Sikhs.

The rise to power of Afghanistan attracted the attention of the British authorities in India early in the nineteenth century, in case the Afghans should get into an alliance with Russia and so open up a route for another European invasion of India. The original ruling family of Afghanistan—the Durani clan—had been dispossessed by an internal revolution, and the usurper—Dost Muhammad, of the Barakzai family—entered for a time into friendly relations with the British Government, partly to stave off attacks from Ranjit Singh and his Sikhs. The

<sup>1</sup> The Hindu Kush and the mountains bounding the south-eastern parts of Afghanistan contains still very interesting semi-savage peoples known by the Arab term of *Kafir*, or unbeliever. A proportion of them are relics, no doubt, of the most ancient Aryan invasions of India. As a rule, they are a handsome people, though very dirty and degraded in their habits, not infrequently with grey or blue eyes and red-brown or yellowish hair. Nearly the whole of Afghanistan was Buddhist before it was invaded and converted by Muhammadan Arabs and Muhammadanized Persians. But the Kafirs were not even Buddhist, and still cherish faiths far more ancient, related to those which lay at the base of the Hindu religion.

supposed rightful ruler of Afghanistan, Shah Shuja, meantime had taken refuge with the British, and resided at Ludhiana, on the Panjab frontier.

For all these reasons, and a great many more, it became a matter of pressing necessity to the British Government to have the Indus region explored and to decide on a frontier policy: namely, as to whether British interests were to be completely arrested on the eastern limits of the Indus basin, or whether they were to extend across that region of semi-desert, of flat agricultural land, steep mountains and salt marshes, up to the very flanks of Persia: for it was obvious that there could be no one, great, dominating, permanent native state between Persia on the west and British India on the east.

Neither the Amirs of Sind, nor perhaps Ranjit Singh of the Panjab, quite welcomed the idea of British enquiry into the geography of these regions, and it was difficult at first to find a pretext for their "peaceful penetration". As their pioneer in this direction, the Government of India selected one of the most remarkable heroes of recent Indian history, SIR ALEXANDER BURNES.

Burnes was born at Montrose, in Scotland, in 1805. When only seventeen he went out to India with a commission in the army of the East India Company. By 1822 he had thoroughly mastered Hindustani and Persian, and had obtained an appointment as interpreter at Surat. In 1826 he was appointed an assistant to the political agent in Kachh<sup>1</sup>. In 1829 he proposed to make a journey

<sup>1</sup> The name of this region was formerly and is still most commonly known as Cutch, a word, however, which is pronounced and officially spelt Kachh. Kachh is a country singularly subject to earthquakes. It is to a great extent a sandy desert surrounding a very large muddy inland lake, which is nothing else but the remains of the former sea anciently separating Himalayan from Dekkan India. Down to the middle of the eighteenth century the easternmost branch of the Indus passed through the coast region of Kachh before entering the sea. But the benefits thus derived from this

of exploration up the Indus River. Two years afterwards he was allowed to undertake this mission, with the ostensible purpose of conveying to Lahor (the capital of the Panjab), up the waters of the Indus, a carriage and four large carriage horses, which had been sent out from England by William IV as a present to the Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He was also to deliver presents and messages from the Indian Government to the Amirs of Sind.

An escort was offered to him, but he most wisely put that on one side and preferred to travel without a guard, in order to dispel any suspicion as to his motives which might be entertained in Sind or the Panjab. He was, therefore, only accompanied by a young British officer of a native regiment (J. D. Leckie), a surveyor, a Parsi doctor, and a few servants.

They started from Mandvi, in Kachh, with a fleet of five native boats, on the 21st of January, 1831. Burnes points out what remarkably adventurous navigators have been the seamen of Kachh, probably from ancient days — how for many centuries they had made their way in small sailing boats across the Indian Ocean to Zanzibar, the Red Sea, and Arabia, and how the maritime enterprise of Kachh (which is as remarkable in 1911 as it was in 1831) was stimulated in the eighteenth century by a native of Kachh, who, with singular independence of character, journeyed all the way to Holland, and

fertilizing stream of water were cut off by a spiteful Sind general, who, failing to conquer the country of Kachh in 1762, caused a great dam of earth to be thrown across the eastern mouth of the Indus, and thus converted the greater part of Kachh into a sandy desert, though to some extent the Indus waters have since been re-admitted. The muddy inland lake is known as the Rann of Kachh. It is about 200 miles long and 35 miles broad, with various branches and ramifications. Such water as lies on the surface is salt. Fresh water can only be obtained on the islands. Of course, the whole of this region was once, and not a great many centuries ago, an inlet of the Indian Ocean, partly fed by the waters of the Indus.



resided in Holland for some years, with the intention of mastering the science of navigation, map-making, and shipbuilding. In middle age he returned to his native country, and there spread amongst his fellow countrymen all the information he had amassed. Thus the Kachhis have become at the present day the boldest native seamen of the Indian Peninsula.

Passing the wild-looking cones of the Kachh hills, they came to the flat shores of Sind, and voyaged for four or five days past all the mouths of the Indus, eleven in number, until they entered the principal mouth, which is on the western side of the delta, and is called the Pitiani. There is not a tree to be seen on the flat coast of Sind, and the coast is not distinguishable three miles from the shore.

Burnes had, in fact, arrived more or less at the site of the now-flourishing seaport of Karachi, one of the most important places in the Indian Empire, but then an almost uninhabited region with a few scattered native villages. After passing a little way up the Pitiani mouth of the Indus, they anchored their boats and awaited the arrival of the soldiers and officials of the Amirs of Sind. They were obliged to stay near the site of Karachi for some days, whilst an exact description of them and their cargo was sent to the headquarters of the Amirs at Haidarabad. "The evil is done," bluntly exclaimed a Baluch soldier; "you have seen our country!" And attempts were made to scare away Burnes and his party by the firing of guns.

Owing to the difficulty of their position Burnes shifted his place of anchor to another mouth of the Indus. The little expedition was once or twice in danger of complete disaster owing to tempests, violent winds, and terrific

breakers,\* but he admired the zeal and bravery of his Kachhi crew, who met all these difficulties by prayers to the patron saint of Kachh, Shah Fir, to whom they burned frankincense and presented a sum of money. Nevertheless, they were obliged to return to Kachh; but at length received permission from the Amirs to ascend the Indus, which they commenced to do in March, 1831. They began their ascent at the city of Tatta. At—or rather, near—this city the Indus was a noble river 2000 feet wide and 15 feet deep. It was at that time very muddy, and the surface was agitated by a violent wind raising up waves which raged with great fury. “I no longer felt wonder at the natives designating so vast a river by the name of ‘darya’, or sea” (Burnes).

By the 12th of April they had got together a little fleet of flat-bottomed boats or *dundis*, together with a small English-built pinnace, which they had brought from Kachh. These boats of the Indus were very capacious, but most unwieldy—floating houses, in which together with the British officers were transported their boatmen, boatmen’s wives and families, and stocks of domestic animals, chiefly goats and fowls. When there was no wind to fill out the sails these boats were hauled up against the stream at the rate of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles an hour. They passed by degrees into the Wanyani or principal branch of the Indus, a fine river, 500 yards broad and 24 feet deep, with nothing but tamarisk on either bank. “We ascended the Indus in the season of the ‘pulla’, a fish of the carp species, as large as the mackerel, and fully equalling the flavour of salmon. It is only found in the four months that precede the swell of the river from January to April, and never higher than the fortress of Bukkur. . . . The mode of catching this fish is ingenious, and peculiar, I believe,

to the Indus. Each fisherman is provided with a large earthen jar, open at the top, and somewhat flat. On this he places himself, and, lying on it horizontally, launches into the stream, swimming or pushing forward like a frog, and guiding himself with his hands. When he has reached the middle of the river, where the current is strongest, he darts his net directly under him, and sails down with the stream. The net consists of a pouch attached to a pole, which he shuts on meeting his game; he then draws it up, spears it, and, putting it into the vessel on which he floats, prosecutes his occupation. There are some vessels of small dimensions, without any orifice, and on these the fishermen sail down, in a sitting posture. Hundreds of people, old and young, may be seen engaged in catching *pulla*, and the season is hailed with joy by the people, as furnishing a wholesome food while it lasts, and an abundant supply of dry fish for the remaining part of the year, as well as for exportation to the neighbouring countries." [Elsewhere in his narrative, Burnes notes in the Indus River the existence of a river dolphin, as high upstream as the confluence of the Ravi River. This has been identified as *Platanista gangetica* (it is also found in the Ganges). The creature is nearly blind, with very small eyes and a long beak-like snout. It lives chiefly on small crustacea.]

Without any incident Burnes's party reached the vicinity of Haidarabad and rode thither 5 miles across a plain, intolerable with dust.

Fortunately, for Lieutenant Burnes, his brother (Dr. Burnes) had recently cured the principal Amir of Sind of a dangerous disease; so that his reception, once political suspicions were calmed, was a very friendly one. But Burnes was surprised at the lack of splendour at the

Amir's Court, which he had been led to believe existed. He was introduced to the prince in a dirty hall, without a carpet, where the great personages sat in a room more than half filled by a rabble of greasy soldiery, who kept up such a noise that the Amir's conversation was often inaudible, while his orders to procure silence were not obeyed. The meanness of this Muhammadan prince—the principal Amir of Sind—was most amusing. Though he was the possessor of a fortune of 15,000,000 sterling, he divided with great care and anxiety gifts from the British Government which did not exceed the value of a few hundred pounds.

From the vicinity of Haidarabad (the principal capital of Sind) they were sent on their journey in the state barge of the Amir. This was a very commodious vessel, flat-bottomed, about 60 feet long, with three masts, carrying three great sails made of alternate strips of red and white cloth. There were two cabins, connected with each other by a deck. The jamti (as this vessel was called) was further decorated by flags and pendants, some of which were 40 feet long. "We hoisted the British ensign at the stern of our pinnace, the first time, I suppose, it had ever been unfurled on the Indus; and the little vessel which bore it outsailed all the fleet. I hope the omen was auspicious, and that the commerce of Britain may soon follow her flag." The crew consisted of sixteen men; and a happy set of beings they were: they waded through the water all day, and swam and sported about, as they passed along, with joyous hearts, returning occasionally to the boat to indulge in smoking hubble-bubble (huka) pipes, and the intoxicating "bangh", or hemp, to which they were much addicted.<sup>1</sup> They prepared this drug by

<sup>1</sup> See p. 218.

straining the juice from the seeds and stalks through a cloth: when ready for use, it resembled green putrid water.

The town of Sehwan, where they made their next halt, was 100 miles farther to the north from Hyderabad, on rising ground at the verge of a swamp, and was a place of great antiquity, with many ruined mosques and tombs—probably a city visited by Alexander the Great. The climate was here, in the latter part of April, most sultry and oppressive,  $112^{\circ}$  F. in the shade in the afternoon, and never less than  $100^{\circ}$  F. at night. After quitting Sehwan they passed within the jurisdiction of another Amir of Sind, who had his headquarters at Khairpur. Continuing their journey towards Khairpur they constantly noticed the very muddy character of the Indus water, though when strained and allowed to stand it was considered a healthy beverage. They would notice natives floating down the stream on bundles of reeds or buoyant skin bags, accompanied possibly by a whole herd of buffaloes. They much preferred journeying southwards in this manner in place of tramping along the banks of the river. The Amir of Khairpur (a Baluch prince), when visited, was found seated on a terrace spread with Persian carpets. He asked innumerable questions about England and its power, but was mild in demeanour (Burnes had heard that all the Baluchi princes were very truculent, which in most cases, past and present, was true). But this particular Amir of a Baluch state was as hospitable as he was modest. His supplies to Burnes's party consisted of eight or ten sheep daily, with all sorts of provisions for one hundred and fifty people. The Europeans of the mission while at Khairpur received twice a day a meal of seventy-two dishes, consisting of *pillao* (rice cooked with chicken,



SIR ALEXANDER BURNES IN THE COSTUME OF BOKHARA



mutton, almonds, raisins, &c.) and other native viands. The cookery, though rich, was delicious, and the food was served up on silver dishes. The Amir also presented Burnes and his party with "two beautiful swords with belts ornamented by large masses of gold" (the blade of one of which was valued at £80), many handsome native cloths and silks; and further a purse of 1000 rupees, "which I did not accept, excusing myself by the remark that I required nothing to make me remember the kindness of Mir Rustam Khan". Nevertheless, Burnes noticed that these Amirs of Sind and their Baluch soldiers and followers wallowed in wealth whilst their people were wretched. "Professing an enthusiastic attachment to the religion of Muhammad, they have not even a substantial mosque in their territories; and at Haidarabad, where the town stands on rock, and indeed everywhere, they pray in temples of mud, and seem ignorant of elegance or comfort in all that concerns domestic arrangement. The Baluchis are a particularly savage race of people, but they are brave barbarians. From childhood they are brought up in arms; and I have seen some of the sons of chiefs who had not attained the age of four or five years strutting about with a shield and a sword of small size, given by the parents to instil into them, at that early period, the relish for war. This tribe composes but a small portion of the Sindian population; and while they are execrated by the peaceable classes of the community for their imperious conduct, they, on the other hand, hate the princes by whom they are governed. It would be difficult to conceive a more unpopular rule, with all classes of their subjects, than that of the Amirs of Sind: nor is the feeling disguised; many a fervent hope did we hear expressed, in every part of the country, that



we were the forerunners of conquest, the advance guard of a conquering army.”<sup>1</sup>

At the northern frontier of Sind, before entering the Baluch State of Bahawalpur (in different boats of lighter draft), Burnes dismissed his Sindian escort, which had followed him from the mouth of the Indus. He had wished to reward them handsomely for their attentions; but for some reasons was much restricted in his generosity by the officers deputed by the Amirs to accompany him. This escort consisted of twenty-four men, twelve of them Baluchis and the remainder Jokias, a tribe of mountaineers near Karachi. “We had not, I am sure, done much to deserve such gratitude; for they had only received an additional month’s pay (eight rupees each) to take them back to their country.” But some of them were loath to leave this sympathetic young Scottish pioneer. “These men used to kill game for us, and were ever ready to anticipate our wishes. Their honesty we found unimpeachable; and we never lost anything in our progress through a strange country, protected by strangers on whom we had no tie, and who had been brought from the fields to enter our service.”

On the 30th of May, Burnes’s little fleet, now swelled to eighteen boats, quitted the Indus at Mithankôt (where it receives the united waters of the Five Rivers, and is 2000 yards wide) and entered the Chenab River, the central affluent of the Indus down which Alexander the Great once sailed (the Chenab was known to the Greeks as the Akesines). They stayed their progress at Uchh, the then capital of the state of Bahawalpur, and the headquarters of the Khan or ruler. The Khan himself was away at

<sup>1</sup> In 1843 Sind was conquered by SIR CHARLES NAPIER and added to British India.

the moment of their arrival, on a shooting expedition, but he sent them immediately a deer which he had just shot, forty vessels of sherbet, and forty jars of sweetmeats and preserves, and also a bag containing 200 rupis to distribute in charity to mark the joyful event of the arrival of the British envoy. "On the morning of the 3rd of June we visited Bahawal Khan, who had alighted at a large house outside the town, a mile distant; he sent an escort of his regular troops, with horses, palankins, and various other conveyances—one of which deserves description: It was a sort of chair, covered with a red canopy of cloth, supported by two horses, one in front and the other behind, and the most awkward vehicle that can be imagined; for it could be turned with difficulty, and the horses did not incline to such a burden. We passed a line of soldiers, about six hundred in number, dressed in uniforms of red, blue, white, and yellow; and then entered the courtyard, under a salute of eighty guns. The passages were lined with officers and chiefs; and we found the Khan seated in an area spread with carpets, attended only by about ten persons: he rose and embraced us. He made particular enquiries regarding Mr. Elphinstone, who, he said, had been the means of raising up a sincere and lasting friendship between his family and the British Government.

"Bahawal Khan is a handsome man, about thirty years of age, somewhat grave in his demeanour, though most affable and gentlemanlike; during the interview he held a rosary in his hand, but the telling of the beads did not interrupt his conversation."

During his stay at Uchh, Barnes conversed with the principal merchants of Bahawalpur. The intelligence of these people, and the extent of their travels, surprised him;

some of them thought nothing of going as far afield as Astrakhan in European Russia. It was through his conversation with these men that he determined to carry out his own most remarkable journeys through Afghanistan to Bokhara. After many evidences of hospitality and kindness on the part of the ruling chief, Burnes set out on his journey towards Lahor. At his departure the Khan of Bahawalpur sent him a present consisting of two horses richly caparisoned with silver and enamel trappings, a trained falcon, and shawls, and trays of the fabrics made at Bahawalpur, some of which were very rich; to these were added a purse of 2000 rupis, and a sum of 200 for the servants; and, last of all, a beautiful matchlock gun, which had its value doubled by the manner in which it was presented. "The Khan", said the messenger, "has killed a deer with this gun; and he begs you will accept it from him, and, when you use it, remember that Bahawal Khan is your friend."

There was little cordiality subsisting between the Sikhs and the people of Bahawalpur; and therefore it was with difficulty that Burnes was able to link up his journeys by reaching the Sikh frontier (at the camp of the soldiers sent by Ranjit Singh to meet him) in the boats with which he had travelled through Bahawalpur, without some outburst of enmity between his old and his new friends. Late at night they reached the Sikh camp, and were at once received by a commander of the Sikh army, who came in considerable state on an elephant, attended by a large retinue. This Sirdar or Commander-in-Chief wore a magnificent necklace of emeralds, and armlets studded with diamonds. He tendered all sorts of congratulations in the name of the Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who had sent two congratulatory letters enclosed in silken bags, besides a bow, which was

a customary gift of honour on the part of the Sikhs. In addition, bags containing 1400 rupis were placed at the feet of Burnes to cover any small expenses connected with his journey.

Burnes was greatly struck with the appearance of the Sikhs—tall and bony men, with a very martial carriage, barelegged from the knee downwards. His attention was also arrested at the words of command given by the soldiers. They were in French, for at that time the Sikh army was controlled and organized by French officers. At this place the much-tried, long-suffering carriage horses sent out from England were landed, and the populace received them with enthusiasm and surprise (they were huge, dappled-grey, dray horses). In size they appeared to them to be little elephants. Their enormous hoofs attracted much attention, and it was found that one of their shoes weighed as much as four ordinary horseshoes of the country. But their slowness of movement created some disappointment, as they were expected to exhibit extraordinary prowess in galloping, cantering, and leaping.

The directions given by the Maharaja Ranjit Singh for the reception of Burnes as the bearer of King William's presents were most elaborate. He was to be provided at once with an honorary escort of two hundred infantry and cavalry; he was to ride on an elephant in a silver-plated hauda, and to be escorted by two great officers of state, each seated on an elephant. When Mr. Burnes was mounted on the elephant, the officers would distribute 225 rupis amongst the poor, and then present him (Burnes) with a handsome bow and 22 gold Venetian ducats (an interesting relic of fifteenth-century India). At the first halting place on the journey Mr. Burnes was to be presented with 1100 rupis and fifty jars of sweetmeats.

## Pioneers in India

To his expedition were to be given grass, grain, bran, milk, eggs, fowls, sheep, curds of milk, vegetables, fruit, roses, spices, water-vessels, beds, and everything that might be necessary, in quantities without bounds. At every halting place on the way to Lahor similar presents of rupis and sweets and fruits were to be made.

Multan, on the Chenab, at which some stay was made, was one of the most ancient cities of India, and probably had been occupied by Alexander the Great. The existing houses in Burnes's time were built upon ruins, and the whole town stood upon a mound of clay, really the material of former habitations which had gradually crumbled. In fact, Multan at the present day stands on about 60 feet of accumulated remains of human habitations. It had been captured by the Sikhs, in 1818, from the Afghans. It was celebrated then, as it is now, for being one of the dustiest cities in India, even though it stood outside the desert region, and had a fair share of rain. But the dust storms were frequent, coming from the direction of the plains of the Indus. Irrigation canals from the Chenab maintained rich meadows and plantations of date palms between the river and the city. These dates are said to have been introduced by one of the first invading Arab armies after the uprise of Islam. A certain Arab general brought a quantity of dates with him on which to feed his soldiers; the soldiers threw away, or planted, the stones, and from them sprang not only the date forests of Multan, but those plantations of the date met with elsewhere in Western and Northern India; for the fruit of the wild date palm indigenous to India is of no account.

At Multan they found more comfortable boats sent down by Ranjit Singh, which were to convey them to Lahor. The arrangements for their progress were now

very complete. They sailed from sunrise to sunset; and every day thirty to forty villagers appeared on the banks to drag each boat.

"The fatigue and exertion which these people underwent in a hot sun was excessive. When they passed a field of melons, but few were left to the owner; and many an old lady scolded loudly as they invaded her property. The people of this country are treated with little consideration by the Government; they are not oppressed, yet considered its servants since the conquest. But for our interference, these villagers, who had waded through the water and quicksands, would have been dismissed empty-handed at night. The bounty of the Maharaja enabled us daily to entertain sumptuously, with flour and ghee, three hundred hungry villagers; and the Mihmandar further assured me that due remission would be made for the destruction of the fields in our progress. While we ourselves advanced by water, the elephants, camels, and escort seconded our motions on shore; and we always found them drawn up in parade array on the ground fixed for our night's encampment; we always slept on shore." From the Chenab they passed into the Ravi River (known to the Greeks as Hydraotes),<sup>1</sup> a much smaller stream than the magnificent Chenab, which is almost equal in volume to the Indus. Burnes manifested the utmost interest in the Chenab's great neighbouring affluent, the river of Kashmir, the Bedusta or Jehlam, which he identified with the Hydaspes of Alexander. Much to the surprise of their Sikh escort, who could not comprehend the motives of their curiosity, he set out on a galloping expedition of 45 miles to the banks of the famous Hydaspes, and to the possible site of the station (the junction between the Jehlam and the

<sup>1</sup> This name still lingers locally in the form of Iraṭti.

Chenab) at which Alexander the Great established a naval arsenal for manufacturing boats in which to send his army down the Indus.

The population of this region between the Chenab and the Ravi consisted of a tribe called Kattia or Jun.

"Few of them are found at any distance from the rivers but in the rainy season. They have immense herds of buffaloes and camels, from the milk of which they derive sustenance; hardly cultivating the soil, though some tolerable fields of tobacco, raised by irrigation, may be seen near their habitations. They are a tall and handsome race; which may be attributed to a rule among them, prohibiting marriages before their females attain the age of twenty years: they believe that the children of an early union, so common among every other Indian tribe, are puny and unhealthy. These Kattia are a predatory and warlike race. . . . They live in scattered villages, and move their houses from place to place. Both men and women were tall and stout, with sunburnt complexions. The men allow their hair to grow in loose tresses over their shoulders: the women have ear-rings of an enormous size; but the stout and sturdy dames appeared not the least encumbered from their weight." . . . Though they had journeyed thus far into the country of the Sikhs, they had not passed a village inhabited by them, or seen any others of the tribe than were attached to their suite. These last probably consisted of the élite of the Sikh army, and Burnes was much impressed by their manly appearance and splendid courage.

"The bravery of our Sikh friends had been already exhibited to us by their attacking the wild hog<sup>1</sup> with a

<sup>1</sup> Unlike the Hindus, and still more the Muhammadans, the Sikhs think very highly of the Wild Boar (*Sus scrofa*) both for its courage and endurance, and for its flesh,

sword, on foot; but a nobler specimen of their courage was displayed in the death of a tiger. We disturbed the animal in a thicket of tamarisk close to our boats; and the Mihmandar immediately invited us to see the sport. . . . The party was entirely composed of horsemen. The monster was speedily wounded by someone, and several riders were unhorsed from the fright of their steeds. The Sikhs then advanced on foot, sword in hand, to attack the tiger: he sprang at one man most furiously; and, as he fixed on his left shoulder, the poor fellow bravely struck his head by a well-directed blow: the contest was unequal, and the man fell, horribly lacerated. His comrades instantly ran up, and, with cuts and wounds, the tiger soon fell. He was a huge animal, and measured 10 feet: his thigh was as large as that of a full-grown man. The coolness and courage of the Sikhs surpass belief; they have great encouragement from their chiefs. To all my enquiries regarding the unfortunate man that had been wounded; they replied, with an ostentation of indifference, that he was but a Sikh, would be well rewarded, and had already received a horse, and his annual pay had been increased 100 rupis.

On the 13th of July (1831) a deputation from the Kardar of Kot Kamalia waited on us with presents of fruit, &c., and a sum of 1100 rupis. A letter was brought, at the same time, from the Maharaja, expressive of his great satisfaction at our approach. The epistle was flowery to a degree seldom met with even in the Persian language, and filled with similes about gardens, roses, zephyrs, and fountains. Every word of a letter which I had addressed

which they eat greedily. Whereas with the Muhammedans it is a deadly offence to call anyone a "sur" (pig), with the Sikhs it is a compliment. The present writer has frequently heard the Sikh soldiers in Central Africa referring to their brave British officers as being "burra sur" (a big pig).



to His Highness was declared to be a bud of everlasting friendship, and every letter of every word was a blown rose!"

At noon, on the 17th of July, they came in sight of the lofty minarets of the Maharaja's mosque at Lahor, and might by nightfall have reached the ancient capital of the Mughal Empire; but the ceremonial of their entrée required arrangement, and they halted 3 or 4 miles from the city, at the earnest request of their conductors. "As the sun set," wrote Burnes, "I saw, for the first time, the massy mountains which encircle Kashmir, clothed in a mantle of white snow. I felt a nervous sensation of joy as I first gazed on the Himalaya, and almost forgot the duties I owed to our conductors, in contemplating these mighty works of nature." Burnes describes the great Ranjit Singh, Maharaja of the Panjab, head of the Sikh nation, and Lord of Kashmir,<sup>1</sup> as "a diminutive, old-looking man". He had, it would seem, at no time a very distinguished presence, but was from his very youth marvellously brave, a splendid rider, a strong swimmer, and a great leader of men. Though he was accused of having poisoned his mother, it is thought more probable that, for political intrigues, he merely imprisoned her, and that she died a natural death. None of those who wrote about him during his lifetime accused him of being cruel; indeed for an Oriental monarch he was clement and kindhearted. His loyalty to the British Government had something very splendid about it. In later life he certainly gave way to drunkenness (a national weakness among the Sikhs), but his name should always

<sup>1</sup> Which country he conquered from the Afghans in 1819. The Afghans had taken it from the Mughal emperors in 1756. The last governor of Kashmir under the Sikhs in 1846, Gulab Singh, a Hindu, was recognized as Maharaja of Kashmir, Ladak, and Jammu by the British Government, under British suzerainty.

be upheld in the annals of India as one of the best of her native princes. He made the Sikh nation what it is to-day: the first and best among the native peoples of India.

Ranjit Singh professed, and no doubt felt, enormous pleasure at the compliment offered to him from King William IV, in sending the big barouche and its enormous, clumsy, dappled dray horses. Burnes won his immediate liking (as he did that of every Oriental, gentle and simple, with whom he came into contact). In the letter of thanks which the Lion of the Panjab caused to be drawn up, and sent to the Secretary of State for India, Burnes is described as "that nightingale of the garden of eloquence, that bird of the winged words of sweet discourse". In the same polite Persian letter the dray horses are described as far surpassing in beauty, stature, and disposition the horses of every city and country in the world. At the sight of their (large) shoes the new moon turned pale with envy, and nearly disappeared from the sky!"

From Lahor Burnes travelled direct to Simla, and laid his report on the Indus before the Governor-General. Soon afterwards his great ambition was satisfied. He was entrusted, at the close of 1831, with a mission of exploration to Afghanistan and Bokhara.

He left Delhi in December, 1831, and proceeded by way of Ludhiana to the Sutlej River just below its confluence with the Béas (the Hyphasis of the Greeks). Here the people (the fine-looking agricultural Jats) informed him of a curious incident, showing how rapidly physical geography may be transformed. About fifty years before Burnes's arrival the Sutlej (which the Greeks knew as Hysudrus) had been completely hemmed in and turned into a lake amongst the mountains on the north by an extraordinary landslide, which had caused the whole hill

to fall across its bed. The lake amongst the mountains steadily rose higher and higher, till at last it came level with the lowest part of this enormous natural dam. It then flowed over the top, and with great rapidity cut its way in a deep gorge through the obstruction. The landslide of this hill was no doubt caused by one of the constantly recurring earthquakes which torment North-western India and Persia, and which were occasionally experienced by Burnes himself.

After revisiting Ranjit Singh at Lahor, and experiencing an earthquake shock in that picturesque city, Burnes travelled out to the lovely Orange Gardens of Shalimar,<sup>1</sup> and near them found Ranjit Singh encamped near the banks of the Ravi for the purpose of hunting game. The scene of the Maharaja's encampment was magnificent. A large pavilion of red cloth, surrounded by extensive walls of the same materials, marked the temporary abode of this prince, while his troops and chiefs were encamped around him in picturesque groups of tents and huts. The suite of tents allotted to Burnes and his party was most elegant. They were made of scarlet and yellow cloth, and the ground was covered with the Kashmir carpets and pieces of French satin. In each tent was a camp bed, with curtains of yellow silk, and coverlets of the same description.

On a later occasion, at the same encampment, their tents were made of Kashmir shawls about 14 feet square. "Two of these were connected by tent walls of the same superb materials, while the intervening space was shaded by a lofty screen, supported on four massy poles, adorned with

<sup>1</sup> Founded by the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan. They were half a mile in length, and in three successive terraces. A canal of water intersected the gardens, and threw up its water in four hundred and fifty fountains to cool the air.

silver. The shawls of one tent were red, of the other, white. In each of them stood a camp bed, with curtains of shawls, which gave one an impression of a fairy abode more than an encampment in the jungles of the Panjab."

When they accompanied Ranjit Singh on a shooting expedition the king was dressed in a tunic of green shawls lined with fur, and carried a dagger studded with the richest brilliants, and a light metal shield. A train of elephants followed him, and a pack of dogs of various breeds led the van. Then came falconers carrying hawks, and even eagles, on their fists. After this followed a company of infantry in extended order, with two or three hundred cavalry, and foresters armed with halberds, who were to put up the game. The game in question was the wild boar, of whom in half an hour eight had been killed by the swords of the Sikh horsemen. A number of live hogs were captured, tied to stakes, and made to fight with dogs, but after a short time Ranjit Singh set all these pigs at liberty, so that the spectators might praise his humanity; to the great amusement of some of the guests, these furious animals dashed for liberty through the crowded encampment.

To salute the coming of the Indian spring in the month of February (1832) Ranjit Singh entertained Burnes and his friends at a wonderful fête, in which, however, it was evident that this national hero of the Sikhs was too much addicted to wine drinking. The palace where the guests were received was a sumptuous building erected under the Mughal Emperors, and contained a great hall about 70 feet long, with a colonnade of marble. The ceiling and walls were entirely inlaid with mirrors, or gilded. They were lit up on this occasion by a multitude of wax

candles, near which were placed bottles filled with different coloured water, so that the blaze of light might pass through these gorgeous tints. A company of dancing women came to amuse the company. To them Ranjit Singh gave draughts of heady wine or distilled spirits, so that they tore and fought with one another "much to his amusement" and much to their pain; for they snatched at each other's heavy ornaments, and pulled them forcibly through the flesh of ears and noses. Then came supper, which consisted of different kinds of meat richly cooked—hare, black buck, mutton, and goat. These meats were chopped up and handed about in leaves, sewed into the shape of cups. Afterwards followed a variety of confectionery and ices.

Burnes received great assistance from the French officers in the service of Ranjit Singh, most of whom had reached their present positions by travelling overland through Turkey and Persia. Their advice and their letters of introduction to friends in Afghanistan and elsewhere proved to be of material assistance. Burnes was accompanied on this journey by James Gerard, a surgeon of the Bengal army, by an Indian surveyor (Muhammad Ali), by an Indian secretary, and by an Indian servant. After crossing the Ravi River and getting near to Afghanistan, he and the rest of his party "threw away all our European clothes, and adopted, without reserve, the costume of the Asiatic". They exchanged their tight dress for the flowing robe of the Afghans, girt on swords and kammarbands (sashes), shaved their heads, donned ponderous turbans, and went about in Panjabi shoes with recurved toecaps, . . . shoes that could be easily thrown off, since they had now to uncover the feet instead of the head. They gave away their tents, beds, and boxes. "A hut or the ground, we

knew, must be our shelter, and a coarse carpet or mat our bed. A blanket, or 'kammal', served to cover the native saddle, and to sleep under during night; and the greater portion of my now limited wardrobe found a place in the 'kurjin', or saddle bags, which were thrown across the horse's quarter. A single mule for each of us carried the whole of our baggage, with my books and instruments; and a servant likewise found a seat upon the animal."

Burnes travelled through Afghanistan to Bokhara in Central Asia, and returned to India by way of Persia. In 1835 he was sent to Sind to arrange a treaty for the opening of the Indus to general navigation, and in 1836 he undertook a mission to Kabul to study the Afghan question. He was inclined to espouse the cause of Dost Muhammad; but his advice was set aside, and his dispatches, even falsified, by Lord Auckland, the Governor-General of India, who had decided to replace Shah Shuja on the throne of Afghanistan against the wishes of the Afghan people. This led to the military expedition of 1839. Burnes was appointed political resident at the Court of Kabul, but when the Afghans rose against their puppet king and the British garrison, Alexander Burnes—one of the most brilliant and remarkable men who have ever served the British Empire abroad—was killed in the first rising, in 1841.

As the result of Lord Auckland's ill-considered intervention in Afghanistan (followed by military disasters, retrieved in a measure by the splendid military achievements of Generals SIR GEORGE POLLOCK and SIR WILLIAM NOTT), the British completely alienated the Afghans from any feeling of esteem or subservience towards the British Empire in India—that India, it must be said, which had been saved from the thousand-year-old raids of the Afghans.

by British intervention. As a set-off for this repulse in Afghanistan (one far more due to climatic conditions and geographical features than to native valour) the British Indian Government somewhat unjustly pounced on Sind, and after the battle of Miani, fought by Sir Charles Napier in 1843 (three thousand British against twenty thousand Baluchis), annexed that important state on the lower Indus to the British Empire. This in turn, and during the remainder of the nineteenth century, led to the extension of British influence over all Baluchistan up to the frontiers of Persia.

Ranjit Singh died in 1839. Soon after his death, and especially after the British annexation of Sind and withdrawal from Afghanistan, the Sikhs displayed a hostile attitude towards the British power. But they were crushed by the two bravely fought wars of 1845 and 1848 and in 1849 the Panjab was added to British India, and, thanks to the administrative ability of Sir John Lawrence, became in a few years such a loyal portion of the Empire that the Sikh people took the British side against Muhammadans and Hindus during the terrible military mutiny and Audh rebellion of 1857-8.<sup>1</sup> Subsequently the Sikhs have not only formed one of the most important elements in the British Indian army, but they have served under British officers in China, the Malay Peninsula, Nyasaland, East Africa, and the Sudan.

<sup>1</sup> Audh (Awadh in its full pronunciation, and Oudh in old-fashioned English spelling) was a very important province of the Mughal Empire in the basin of the Upper Ganges and its affluents, south of Nipal. The governorship of this province was entrusted in 1720 to Saadah Ali Khan, a Persian. In the early part of the nineteenth century the Nawab, or hereditary governor of Audh (a country 25,000 square miles in extent), was recognized by the East India Company as "King of Audh". In 1856 the kingdom of Audh was annexed to British India by simple proclamation, an arbitrary action which was one of the main causes of the rebellion in the following year. An excellent description of the dissolute, spendthrift Court of Audh in 1828 is given by Captain Mundy in the book mentioned below.

Meantime, during all these wonderful explorations of Central and Southern Asia in the first half of the nineteenth century, all India, as far east as Lower Burma,<sup>1</sup> remained theoretically the fief of a huge overgrown Chartered Company, and under the protection of that Company there still went on the succession of Mughal emperors at Delhi. Captain Mundy, who had been an aide-de-camp to a Commander-in-Chief in India in the first quarter of the

<sup>1</sup> As regards the additional dominions of Britain in Southern Asia, outside continental India and Burma, the Andaman Islands were more or less occupied from 1789, and Ceylon had been taken from the Dutch in 1795, and conquered from the natives (kingdom of Kandi) in 1815-7 under the governorship of SIR ROBERT BROWNRIGG. From 1796-1801 Ceylon was under the control of the East India Company (government of Madras), but after 1801 it was erected into an independent colony. The foundations of British Malaysia had been laid in 1786 by the acquisition of Pinang Island on the west side of the Malay Peninsula, to which was added in 1800 the province Wellesley on the mainland behind Pinang. The state of Malacca was taken from the Dutch in 1796, and the all-important island of Singapore, at the very extremity of the peninsula, was obtained by the far-sighted SIR STAMFORD RAFFLES in 1819 by treaty from the Sultan of Johor. The settlement now known as the Dindings (together with small adjacent islands) was acquired between 1826 and 1874 as a base for the suppression of piracy. All these British settlements in Malaysia were under the government of the East India Company till 1826, when they were erected into a separate colony, afterwards called the Straits Settlements. To atone to the Dutch for the loss of several of their Far Eastern possessions (some of which had already been occupied by the French), the British gave up to Holland in 1818 Java, and in 1824 all British settlements and rights in Sumatra. Between 1842 and 1905 all the northern third of Borneo came under British control in a direct or indirect form, originally because of the piratical attacks made on European shipping passing this island on its way to China. Hong Kong and its adjacent mainland territory in Southern China were acquired between 1841 and 1868. The Nicobar Islands, near Sumatra, were acquired from Denmark in 1868. The Cocos Islands in the mid-Indian Ocean were occupied in 1857, and Christmas Island in 1888. The annexation of Ceylon carried with it the protectorate over the Maldiv and Lakkadiv Islands (Mauritius, the Seychelles, and other archipelagoes of minute islands in the western Indian Ocean had been taken from France by 1810). Then in 1839 renewed attention was paid to the affairs of Arabia owing to the opening up of the overland route through Egypt to the Red Sea. Aden was occupied in 1839, and this garrison of a good harbour near the mouth of the Red Sea led in time to a protectorate over Sokatra Island, over all Southern Arabia, and over much of the southern shore and Bahrein Islands of the Persian Gulf. After 1879 the foreign relations of Afghanistan passed into the control of the Indian Government, and in 1907 South-eastern Persia was declared to be a British sphere of influence. In 1894 an arrangement was come to with France whereby the narrow strip of the Malay Peninsula, between Burma and British Malaysia, which belongs to the kingdom of Siam, was recognized as a region within which British political interests must predominate.



nineteenth century, and who wrote in 1832 a very interesting book on the India of that day,<sup>1</sup> gives an interesting description of a visit to the Court of the Great Mughal at Delhi in 1828, when that Court, instead of being the centre of government of an empire of one hundred and fifty millions of people, of 1,000,000 square miles, and with a revenue of £38,000,000 a year (in 1697), had shrunk to a control over the single city of Delhi. The name of this puppet emperor, the sixteenth in succession from Babar, was Muhammad Akbar II, who died in 1837.

"On entering the precincts of the royal abode (the palace at Delhi), we filed through sundry narrow and dirty alleys, until we arrived at an arched gate, too low to admit our elephants. We were therefore obliged to dismount and proceed on foot. Lord Combermere, however, balked the evident intention of the prince to make him walk by getting into his palankin. We shortly arrived at the archway leading into the quadrangle, in which the Diwâni Khâs, or hall of audience, is situated, where the commander-in-chief was required to dismiss his palankin..

"On passing the Lal Purdah, or great red curtain which veils the entrance, the whole of our party, English and native, made a low salaam in honour of the august majesty of which we were as yet not in sight. . . . Our doing so, however, was no doubt attributed by the Mogul courtiers that attended us, not to the mere distance of space between the spot where we stood and the audience chamber, but to the dazzling effect produced upon our eyes by the intense rays emanating from the throne of the 'king of kings'—the sun of their worship! The obeisance duly effected, we advanced, not directly across the court

<sup>1</sup> *Pen and Pencil Sketches, being the Journal of a Tour in India*, by Captain Mundy, 2 vols, John Murray. London, 1832.

to the edifice containing the throne, but by a respectful, circuitous, oblique, crab-like evolution.

"At the entrance of the corridor leading to the Presence the Resident and his assistants were required to take off shoes and hats; but, according to previous agreement, Lord Combermere (the Commander-in-Chief) and his suite retained both boots and hats during the whole ceremony.

"The Diwāni Khâs is a beautiful open edifice, supported on white marble columns, the whole elegantly inlaid and gilt. The roof is said to have been vaulted with silver in the more prosperous days of the Delhi empire, but it was spoiled by those common devastators of India, the Mahrathas. Around the cornice still remains the (now, at least, inapplicable) inscription: 'If there be a Paradise upon earth, it is this, it is this'. The throne, occupying the centre of the building, is raised about 3 feet from the floor, and shaded by a canopy of gold tissue and seed pearl. There are no steps to the front of the throne, the entrance being in the rear. Seated cross-legged upon it, and supported by surrounding cushions, we found the present representative of the Great Mughal. He is a fine-looking old man, his countenance dignified, and his white beard descending upon his breast. On his right hand stood his youngest and favourite son, Selim, and on the left the heir apparent, a mean-looking personage, and shabbily attired in comparison with his younger brother. It was impossible to contemplate without feelings of respect, mingled with compassion, the descendant of Babar, Akbar, Shah Jahan, and Aurangzeb, reduced, as he is now, to the mere shadow of a monarch; especially when one reflected that had it not been for European intrigues and interference this man, instead of being the dependent pensioner of a handful of merchants, might

perhaps still, like his ancestors, have been wielding the sceptre of the richest and most extensive dominions in the world.

"The old monarch, mindful of his dignity, scarcely deigned to notice, even by a look, the Commander-in-Chief as he approached to present his 'nazzar' of fifty gold mohurs. He did not even condescend to raise his eyes towards the rest of the party as we advanced one by one, salaamed, and offered our three gold mohurs. His air, however, was not haughty, but he affected a sleepy, dignified indifference as he scraped the money from our hands, and handed it to his treasurer. The staff presented likewise a *nazzar* of two gold mohurs to the heir apparent."

"On receiving Lord Combermere's offering the king placed a turban similar to his own upon his head, and his lordship was conducted, retiring with his face sedulously turned towards the throne, to an outer apartment, to be invested with a *khillât* or dress of honour. In about five minutes he returned to the presence attired in a spangled muslin robe and tunic, salaamed, and presented another *nazzar*. The staff were then led across the quadrangle by the 'grooms of the robes' to the 'green room', where a quarter of an hour was sufficiently disagreeably employed by us in arraying ourselves with the aid of the grooms in silver muslin robes, and fillets of the same material tastily bound round our cocked hats. Never did I behold a group so ludicrous as we presented when our toilette was accomplished; . . . in my gravest moments the recollection of this scene provokes an irresistible fit of laughter. As soon as we had been decked out in this satisfactory guise, we were marched back again through the Lal Purdah and crowds of spectators, and reconducted to the Diwâni Khâs, where we again separately approached His Majesty to

receive from him a tiara of gold and false stones, which he placed with his own hands on our hats. . . . We again presented a gold mohur each. [The Honourable Company, of course, 'paid for all', and our gold mohurs were handed to us by the resident.] It was a fine pay-day for the impoverished old Sultan, whose 'pay and allowances' are only twelve laks of rupis, or £120,000 a year.<sup>1</sup> His ancestor the Emperor Akbar's revenue was somewhat better; including presents and estates of officers of the Crown falling in, it amounted to about fifty-two millions sterling.

"As we retired from the presence the heralds, with stentorian voices, proclaimed the titles of honour which had been conferred by the Emperor on his Excellency the Commander-in-Chief. Among other high-sounding appendages to his name he received the following: Ghazaffar al Daulah, or Champion of the State; Sipeh Salai, Commander-in-Chief; Saif-al-Muluk, Sword of the Empire; Khan Jahan, Lord of the World; Khan Bahâdur; and Rastam Jang, which latter might be translated the Hercules of Battles. In addition to these titular honours his lordship was presented with a palankin of state and the naubat or royal kettle drum, which, if I mistake not, confers the power of life and death."

In 1858 the last (seventeenth) Mughal emperor, Muhammad Bahadur Shah, was deposed and exiled to Rangoon. His two sons, grandson, and nephews had been executed after the taking of Delhi. The vast possessions and responsibilities of the East India Company

<sup>1</sup> Captain Mundy overlooks the fact that the Mahrattas and Afghans ruined the Mughal emperors, and that but for the East India Company the last monarchs of this dynasty would have been destitute.

(which for long had been controlled by the Secretary of State for India) were vested in the Crown. In 1876 Queen Victoria was proclaimed at Delhi Empress of India; in December, 1911, her grandson, King George V of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dependencies beyond the Seas, was proclaimed Emperor of India at Delhi. His descendants will hold that proud position—for which the way was prepared, often unconsciously, by many a European pioneer, Portuguese, Italian, Dutch, French, English, Scotch, and Irish—so long as the British nation presides over the destinies of India for the main benefit of the Indian peoples, and for no such selfish purposes as animated their predecessors in empire—Aryans, Brahmans, Greeks, Persians, Arabs, Afghans, Tibetans, Tatars, Turks, and Portuguese.

